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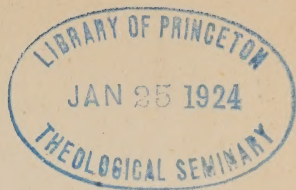
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The groundwork of belief

Cairnes Cutler

1881

THE
GROUNDWORK OF BELIEF



THE
GROUNDWORK OF BELIEF

BEING AN

INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN AND FOUNDATION
OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

Scarcely a gleam of sun in this book

BY

✓
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MATHEMATICAL MASTER OF UPPINGHAM SCHOOL

'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets'

'Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto'

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PREFACE.

HE who would expect to find in the following pages a body of Scientific or Religious Truth would look in vain. In this 'Groundwork of Belief' the writer has rather endeavoured to indicate methods and principles than to establish conclusions. *How* we think appears to him as important as *what* we think. To think in the right way, and to think of the right things, will probably lead us to right results.

Moreover, he has been sincerely desirous to keep individual opinion, and even individual belief, however strongly or earnestly held, in the background. He has been anxious to encourage the studentlike spirit of enquiry, and to repress the authoritative utterances of dogmatism ; and it would seem out of place, at least in the present treatise, to lay down the law on great and difficult questions, such as the nature of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement, the efficacy of prayer, the nature of the life to come, the doctrine of free-will, or the origin of evil. It is better to be

pronounced ignorant, or doubtful, than to incur the charge of absolutism.

But on one point it appears to the writer impossible to speak too strongly—the pre-eminent claims of right conduct. ‘One thing is needful,’ says our Lord, and no doubt the ‘one thing’ is the attitude of love, trust, reverence, and obedience, due from children to their father. This ‘one thing’ implies, as a natural corollary, brotherhood, and sacrifice of self for others. All opinions, or dogmas, which militate against this attitude of mind and heart, are mere words ‘spoken into the air,’ if not worse. Orthodoxy shall fail, and heterodoxy shall fail, but charity never faileth. And while the orthodox Christian is proclaiming ‘We have Christ to our Saviour,’ let him not forget that of the very stones—of infidels, and freethinkers, and men of other religious systems—God is able to raise up true servants and disciples unto Christ. Not everyone that saith ‘Lord, Lord,’ but he that doeth righteousness, according to the light given him, shall enter into the Kingdom of God—into the house of the Father which hath ‘many mansions,’ ‘prepared’ for them that do His will, though they do not follow Jesus.

This treatise, so far as it is devoted to religious ends, is not intended for the unorthodox, but for the orthodox.

Arguments which might be of weight with 'infidels' have been omitted. On the other hand, an attempt has been made to show how small is the importance of many of the religious controversies which divide men, generally into eager, often into angry opponents. In all disputes let steady reference be made to the one thing needful. Do not ask whether a man is a Christian or a Mohammedan, a Romanist or a Protestant, a Churchman or a Nonconformist, but whether his doctrine conduces to right life, to good citizenship, to noble actions, to surrender of the heart to a good and wise Father. If this be so, the doctrine is of God, and do not let us be found fighting against God.

For it appears to the writer that there is much unconscious and ignorant 'fighting against God' just now on the part of the orthodox. Deeply as he regrets a good deal in the tendencies of 'modern thought,' with its new 'platforms,' and new phraseology, and new points of departure, he regrets still more the exclusive spirit and narrow platform of the orthodox, and anticipates the greatest danger for the people, for the educated, and for the Church of the faithful, if our religious leaders and teachers cannot enlarge the horizon of their sympathies and beliefs. Therefore to them specially he addresses himself.

The aim of the present 'inquiry' is mainly religious. It has been, however, a part of the writer's scheme to pursue this inquiry into other branches of human interest besides religion. Hence the three chapters on General Primary Axioms, on the Sciences, and on the Arts. The object has been to show, in each case, how small is the substratum of known truth, and how tentative, frequently, are the methods of arriving at conclusions. But if, even in these more certain and exact branches of human knowledge, where the dictates and impulses of passion are least obtruded, there is so much need of caution, and docility, and the chastened restraint of the imagination, how much more will these be necessary in the case of religion, where the axioms are least assured, and the course of calm reasoning so greatly subject to the control and interference of individual opinion.

The writer, in conclusion, desires to express his thanks to Dr. Abbott, Head Master of the City of London School; to the Rev. T. B. Rowe, Head Master of Tonbridge School; and to his colleague, the Rev. G. Christian, not less due to them where they differ from him, than in the many points of agreement, for their kind suggestions and advice in revising this work for publication.

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A DEDICATION AND ADDRESS TO THE ORTHODOX.

‘MAN cannot live by bread alone.’ Not only must his stomach be periodically fed, but his heart and brain must be supplied with sustenance. In other words, in order that man may live as man should, in addition to the legitimate calls of his animal or bodily appetites, he is bound by his nature to satisfy his intellectual and emotional cravings.

As the bodily appetites are satisfied with ‘bread,’ so the intellectual and emotional requirements are satisfied with ‘beliefs.’¹ Man is an animal, and, in common with the brutes, he must have bread ; but man is far more than an animal, and, in distinction to the brutes, he must say ‘I believe.’

On belief is founded Science, Art, Civilisation, Culture, Religion. What is belief itself founded on ? Is it founded on certain knowledge ? So that to say (for instance), ‘I believe that a Divine Person is the Creator of all things,’ has the same force as to say, ‘I know that a Divine Person is the Creator of all things,’ just as one might say, ‘I know that this tablecloth is made of wool?’ Or is belief founded on surmises, opinions, and possibilities of less or greater (it may be of exceeding) weight ? So that, as before, to say, ‘I believe that a Divine

¹ With ‘affections’ also ; with which, in the present chapter, we are concerned only incidentally.

Person is the Creator of all things,' has the same force as to say, 'I have very good reasons for thinking it exceedingly probable that a Divine Person is the Creator of all things,' just as we might say, 'I believe there will be a shower of falling stars next November.' Or is belief (as it would often seem to be) merely a name for assent which has rejected all opposing or converse propositions? Can belief be made to depend on an unbroken chain of undeniable logical propositions, the elemental proposition being as undeniable as each succeeding link? Or is belief, really and truly, only opinion held so strongly and wrought so inextricably into the warp and woof of spiritual, intellectual, and æsthetic life, that a man would sooner part with his natural life than with his belief? If belief differs *in kind* from opinion, then should infidels, atheists, and agnostics learn their subordinate place among the beasts that perish, or with the fools whose eyes are in the ends of the earth, or with the ignorant, wise in their own conceits, to whom is apportioned a rightful inheritance in the limbo of vanities. But if belief only differs *in intensity* from vague opinion, then ought men of differing beliefs not only to deal charitably one with another, but also kindly and sympathetically; and the infidel, atheist, and agnostic should not be treated with scorn, and dislike, unless, *in addition* to his shrewd scepticism, his balancing eclecticism, his cautious agnosticism, he takes for the rule of his life the cynical and chilling motto, 'Nil admirari.'¹

The principal objects proposed for consideration in this treatise are to show that belief (doubtless much more than belief, but certainly belief) is essential to noble life; to

¹ That is, when translated into modern English, to find nothing in the material and spiritual world to admire and reverence—to be as far as possible removed from Wordsworth's frame of mind when brooding with affection and wonder over the meanest flower that blows.

point out further that belief (so far as opinion in contradistinction to knowledge enters into its composition) only differs from opinion in intensity; and to urge, as an inference, the propriety and wisdom of sympathy and charity. It appears to the writer that the one thing that is more fatal to mental and moral progress than any other is the spirit of dogmatism. This spirit of dogmatism may express itself offensively in bitter and authoritative condemnation of antagonistic theories and beliefs, and in *ex cathedrâ* utterances from a self-constituted judgment-seat, and so work a public wrong; or, while refraining from any open expression of condemnation or contempt, it may be equally destructive of the receptive and student-like, of the generous and childlike, frame of mind, and so work far-reaching private and individual wrong, reacting in time on the life of the nation and the world. This death-dealing spirit of dogmatism must be avoided in all ways. To abstain from all anathema is not sufficient. It is not even sufficient to be ready and able to find good in everything. It is further necessary to be anxious for and expectant of good in everything. Not only must we welcome the noble element in the beliefs of an adversary, but further (*ab hoste doceri*), we should gladly mould our own beliefs, as far as possible, in conformity with the fresh light that will surely accompany a large-hearted examination into honest and not unreasonable views opposed to our own.

It may be said that Jesus uttered bitter and authoritative denunciations against his adversaries, the Pharisees. That is true. But it would seem that what Jesus condemned was exactly this narrow and censorious dogmatism which He knew and declared to be fatal to the liberty and life of the Kingdom of God.

It may further be said, that if all theories, not unreasonable and honestly held, are to be approached in a

friendly spirit, there is danger lest the clear outlines of truth should be blurred, and lest an indiscriminating eclecticism should settle down into the lees of latitudinarianism and apathy, or should be accompanied with the Montaignesque shrug and the hopeless 'Que sais-je?' But it appears to the writer that the true parent of apathy is the dogmatic frame of mind, and that earnest seeking, 'sweet persuasiveness' and persuadableness, and the student disposition, is likely to develop into sincerity, simplicity, enthusiasm, and, finally, into a reasonable and steadfast belief.

There have been many times in English history in which the spirit of mocking and indifference has prevailed more generally and penetrated more deeply than now, pervading all classes and conditions of men, high and low, clergy and laity, learned and unlearned; but probably at no previous period in England have the unostentatious morality, the self-sacrificing philanthropy, the robust and healthy energy, the earnest and reverent research of the cultured and intellectual classes, or the sturdy independence of thought, and the resolute, if blundering, searching for good and right of the working classes—at no previous period in our history have they been so completely separated from the formulated utterances of modern Christianity, from the sincere convictions of the clergy, and the deeply cherished traditions of the religious classes. This is as sad as it would appear to be preventible. It is as sad in blossom as it is disastrous in fruit. And the final object of this treatise is an earnest appeal to the orthodox to step aside a little out of their self-complacency and from the position of spiritual superiority which they claim, to place themselves as far as possible on a level with the infidel, the atheist, and the agnostic, as men and brothers, and to see what they can do to draw closer, or indeed, and alas, to begin to strengthen the bonds of union.

For consider the increasingly common phase of religious thought in which a man has found (or believes that he has found) much of that which he learnt in his earliest years at his mother's knee, and of that instilled later on into his receptive mind by his pastors and masters, to be erroneous and fallacious—certainly unprovable. He will frequently take no pains, or too little pains, to discriminate between the essential and the accidental, the important and the mere outward appearance. What help shall such a man receive that he may not sicken into the morbid condition of one who thinks there is no good in believing anything, and nothing much worth believing ; whose religion at best is nothing more than a respectable *nominis umbra*—like that of his neighbours?

If only some confusing and scholastic technicalities with regard to the nature of the Trinity, or the Procession of the Holy Ghost, or the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus, were in question, it might be argued that no great harm was done ; but if, as is sometimes the case with certain grosser natures, loss of religion entails loss of morality, or if, as with some gracious and delicate souls, disbelief in dogmatic Christianity is followed by disbelief in immortality and the Fatherhood of the Supreme Being, bringing in its train a cheerless and hopeless view of life, its progress, its destinies, and its duties, then indeed the case is very desperate. For without a life to come, or a Father of the spirits of men, all goodness and goodliness appear as accidental and erratic veins in the unshapen block of humanity. Even if goodness has not disappeared, its meaning and beauty have disappeared ; for the benevolent purpose, the governing impulse, and the designing hand are withdrawn. What shall be said or done to stay this mischief?

The *practical* answer of the clergy and the religious classes is too often, 'If *you* refuse to accept my belief as

regards the Trinity, the number of Sacraments, the bread and wine in the Holy Communion, the priestly power devolved from Apostolic times, justification by faith, the miraculous element of our Sacred Books, and so on,—then *I*, who hold in my hands the key of entrance to these Good Tidings, refuse to unlock to you other Good Tidings, as the hope of immortality, the love of God, the love and sympathy of Christ. You must accept the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. You must not pick and choose. To you there can be no Father in heaven, no Elder Brother on earth, if you reject what I tell you is the teaching of that Father and that Elder Brother. There is no guide for your life, no lamp for your feet, no warmth for your heart, and no light for your eyes, if your guide is not my guide, your lamp is not fed with my oil, your warmth and light do not come from my sun.’ And thus, when a man rejects what he feels to be the shells and husks of individual opinion and traditional hearsay, there is a strong and often a successful attempt made to refuse him what would fire his heart, strengthen his purpose, purify and enlarge his conscience, make him greater than human, because believing in, and thereby approximating to, the Divine.

‘Orthodoxy,’ doubtless, in its correct signification means a right belief, the holding of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is a precious gift. But who has it? Who shall possess it? How shall he prove his possession? How shall he share it? The writer would strongly deprecate any sacrifice of truth, but while truth remains hard to get at, and to defend against all onslaughts, while orthodoxy has no certain and substantial status in the world of thought—in other words, while it is still a matter to be settled what orthodoxy consists of—it would seem well that no one man should withhold from another man *life*.

For to pass through this world with a desire for and a belief in immortality is Life ; to know God as a Father, and to know Jesus as the man who has done the best and most lasting work for man—as the Son of God—this is Life eternal. Such a belief means a rich life here, enclosing the germ of progress hereafter. Such a belief is not the whole truth, it may be regarded as miserably insufficient ; but again, I say to the clergy and to the religious classes, will you, *by your words and deeds and life, practically* withhold it from the unbeliever and the unorthodox ? Or do you deny that it is Life ?

I have been using the words *believe, belief*, without defining them. Before proceeding, let us attempt to convey what the words mean in their popular signification, and what they shall be held to mean throughout this treatise.

It is clear at starting that, in popular parlance, the word *believe* has two entirely different and indeed antagonistic significations. If a person says, ‘I believe that there will be a shower of shooting-stars next November,’ he means, ‘I think so, but I do not know.’ If a person says, ‘I believe that God is the Father of all men,’ he means, ‘I do not simply think this, I am steadfastly persuaded of it.’ He means (or he probably means) much more than this, of which we shall speak directly, but at least he means as much as this. A distinction, in any case, is made (in these two meanings of belief) between mere opinion and persuasion.

But the objection might be raised, ‘When I assert that I believe that God is the Father of all men,’ I mean ‘I know that God is the Father of all men.’ To this it may be fairly answered : ‘No, you do not know it ; you only think you know it. You mean that you have a steadfast persuasion, a *sense* of certainty and security in making your affirmation. On that *sense* of certainty you may build all your actions with

a *sense* of security, just as on *certainty* you may build your actions with *security*. Whether a sense of certainty is the same as certainty is a matter for consideration ; in other words, whether knowledge which is supposed to be founded on certainty, is the same as belief which is founded on a sense of certainty, is the very point in dispute. But until you can prove that knowledge and belief are the same, you are using words that are not synonymous in a synonymous and unscientific manner.'

In this treatise the word *belief* will never be used in its signification of mere opinion. We make the following distinction between *belief* and *knowledge* :—We apply the word *belief* to a steadfast persuasion, to a sense of certainty and security in affirmation, where proof is supposed to be absent or incomplete. We apply the word *knowledge* to that certainty which is supposed to be arrived at by absolute proof. Knowledge is the evidence of things palpable, belief the evidence of things unseen and impalpable.

But belief in its highest sense implies much more than steadfast persuasion founded on intellectual processes. In its highest sense, an emotional element enters into its composition. We not only speak of believing a thing. We speak of believing in a thing. To revert to our former instances. A man who says, 'I believe that there will be a shower of shooting-stars next November,' might be able to add—'but I do not know, and I do not care.' But a man who says 'I believe in God the Father of all men,' implies in the word *belief*, if the sentence is to him more than a dry formula, in addition to the element of steadfast persuasion, the emotions of love and trust, and the obligation of reverential and filial obedience, and implies further that the belief is a matter of great, perhaps of the utmost, importance to him. 'The devils believe' that there is a God, says the Apostle. They do not believe in God. Their belief does

not give them hope and trust. 'The devils believe and tremble.'

Belief simply as belief may impart a vigorous life, but without this further sense of solicitude, of duty, of hope and trust and love, or of fear and abhorrence, it has no salt or preservative power in it. It does not lead to progress, to a higher life, to immortality. To believe that there is a God is good, says St. James. But, he implies that to stop there is of little value. The devils do as much as that.

Belief, I repeat, simply as belief, may lead to much vigorous action, but its value lies in its twin fruits of duty and love. There are men on whom the word 'duty' acts as the imperative call of the trumpet in the thickest of the fray, whose heroic souls unfurl broad banners, who strike hard and strike home, for God and man, for justice and the right, and to whom love, if not less sweet, appears in its sternest and most mystic aspect, barely recognised as embracing duty in its all-enfolding grasp. And there are men who learn to suffer and to wait patiently, who listen to the still small voice, who command the storm by bending before it, whose lives grow and expand under the warm breath of inspiring love, and on whom duty presses with no heavy hand, because they cannot separate duty from his twin-brother, love. But, in any case, belief whose outcome is not love and duty, hope, trust, and enthusiasm, is dead while it lives.

If so, why talk so much of belief?—why not confine oneself to love and duty?

For four reasons :

1. Because a *right* belief, even if not *all important*, is better than a *wrong* belief.
2. Because without belief of some sort love and duty cannot exist—at least, no such love and duty as are worth considering here. I have said that man's emotional and

intellectual appetites must be satisfied with beliefs, but as man's stomach may not assimilate the food he eats, and he may starve in the midst of plenty, so his emotions and intellect may fail to assimilate the beliefs he professes in a healthy and natural manner, and thus his higher nature may starve in the midst of barren opinion and dogma, and never be sustained with the sweet influences of love and duty. A man *may* not live with good food ; he *cannot* live without food. So a man's heart and head *may* not live with beliefs ; but without beliefs, he must not expect any worthy conceptions of love and duty.

3. Because it is the right part of a belief that produces a right feeling of love and a right notion of duty. A false belief acts or may act as a poison, and, at least, acts as a narcotic drug or as a fiery potion, not with the natural, secret, simple action of plain food.

4. It is difference of beliefs that divides men ; and my main object is to bind orthodox and unorthodox with the cord of common sympathy. 'I love God,' says the orthodox. 'I love God,' says the unorthodox, equally sincerely, equally earnestly, equally reverently. 'Nay,' says the orthodox, 'you must not only love God, you must love Him in my way, you must think so and so of Him, else your love is worse than useless ; it is a snare to you.' Again 'A, was a good man,' says the unorthodox, 'because he did such and such noble actions.' 'Nay,' says the orthodox, 'his noble actions do not prove goodness, or being near the heart of God, for he did not believe so and so.' In this treatise, therefore, I desire to examine into the question of differing beliefs, and to see whether, in the matter of beliefs, some sort of warm-hearted accord cannot be produced out of the midst of discord and self-hardening condemnation of others.

And here I would finish with four aphorisms :

It is better to believe erroneously than not to believe at all—to be an unconverted Paul than to be a savage.

It is better to love unworthily than not to love at all.

It is better to trust unworthily than not to trust at all. Even a dog who trusts a brutal master is better than a monkey.

A mistaken notion of duty is better than no care of duty at all.

THE GROUNDWORK OF BELIEF.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IT is conceivable that a man might say, 'I believe that 3 and 2 make 5. I believe also that 3 and 2 make 6.'¹

In order to clear the ground at starting of such a mental conception, we will lay down the following primary proposition, which for the present shall be designated Principle 1 :

PRINCIPLE 1.—*Mutually contradictory propositions cannot both be true ; neither can a self-contradictory proposition be true.*

I am not at present in a position to determine whether this proposition can or cannot be proved, nor

¹ In Chemistry the same simple elements compounded together in the same proportions may produce completely dissimilar substances. Of course if the resulting substances are different, there must be a reason for the difference, and this is to be sought for in the different modes of combination.

even whether it is true or false. All I assert is, that it is a very reasonable assumption ; and all I ask is, as we must build on some foundation, that *here*, and *by us*, at least for the present, this Principle shall be held to be true. It will be observed, that we have here, with different phraseology, Locke's famous sample proposition : 'It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be.'

Again, it is conceivable that a man might say, 'I grant that all men are animals ; I grant also that John is a man ; but I deny that it follows that John is an animal.'

In order to clear the ground of this mental conception, we will lay down a second primary proposition, at present to be designated Principle 2 :

PRINCIPLE 2.—*The truth of certain propositions having been conceded, there are logical processes whereby definite conclusions founded on these propositions can be absolutely proved to be true.*

Here again I make no assertion as to whether this proposition can be proved, or whether it is true. I merely submit that it is a very reasonable proposition, and ask that *here* and *by us*, at least for the present, it should be accepted as true.

It is manifest from our acceptance of Principle 2, that the assertion that a proposition is true will in

general be made to depend on the assertion that previous propositions are true, and similarly, that the assertion that these previous propositions are true will in general be made to depend on the assertion that propositions prior to them are true, and so on. The assertion that any proposition is true will, therefore, in the end, be made to depend on elementary propositions which either cannot be proved to be true, or which themselves depend on still more elementary propositions. In any case, we at last get to propositions which cannot be made to depend on more elementary propositions, or, in other words, which cannot be logically proved to be true. From these considerations we arrive at a third primary proposition, namely :

PRINCIPLE 3.—*There are propositions, generally assumed to be true, which cannot be logically proved to be true.*

We see thus that propositions can be divided into two classes, to which we will give the names of *Primary Propositions* and *Inferential Propositions*. *Primary* propositions are those which, while believed to be true, are generally held to be incapable of proof, or at least to have never yet been proved. *Inferential* propositions are those which result by logical process from the admission of acknowledged primary propositions or of propositions already proved.

Whether or no any specified proposition is really a primary proposition, or only held to be a primary proposition, is not here a matter of importance. It will not alter the fact of the existence of the two classes. Just as in Chemistry one of the 'simple elements' is at any time liable to be resolved into two or more other simple elements, in which case, for the future, such element ceases to be a simple element, and takes its rank as a compound body, so also a primary proposition may at any time be discovered to be deduced from other primary propositions, in which case the primary proposition will be considered for the future to be an inferential proposition. But though primary and inferential propositions may thus occasionally change places as knowledge and accurate discrimination make progress, yet the two classes remain distinct. For instance, I have called the two Principles 1 and 2, as above, primary propositions, but if any person were to assert and to prove that they were inferential propositions, it would be necessary to accept them for the future as inferential propositions. They would not cease to be true so long as the primary propositions on which they were thus made to depend were acknowledged to be true and the line of argument to be fair and rigorous.

I will take as an example of a primary proposition, 'The whole is greater than its part.' This is generally believed to be true, notwithstanding the Greek proverb to the contrary; but, as I conceive, no attempt has

been made to prove it, nor do I suppose that anybody has ever thought it could be proved. It is generally assumed that the nature of a sentence being understood, and the meaning of the words *whole*, *greater*, *part* apprehended, the proposition that the whole is greater than its part will at once be assented to without any argument. As an example of an inferential proposition, I will take the proposition that 3 and 2 make 5. This proposition depends on certain definitions and primary propositions. The definitions are, 1 and 1 are 2, 2 and 1 are 3, 3 and 1 are 4, 4 and 1 are 5. In the footnote the proof of this proposition is given, assuming the truth of the primary propositions as they arise.¹

$$^1 2 = 1 + 1. \text{ [Def.]}$$

But if the same thing be added to equals, the wholes are equal. [Prim. Prop.]

$$\therefore 3 + 2 = 3 + \overline{1 + 1}. \text{ [Logical Concl.] (1)}$$

Again $3 + \overline{1 + 1}$ is a quantity consisting of two parts, [Def.]

But a quantity consisting of two parts is not altered if one part be increased by as much as the other is diminished. [Prim. Prop.]

$$\therefore 3 + \overline{1 + 1} = \overline{3 + 1} + 1. \text{ [Concl.] (2)}$$

Again $3 + 2 = 3 + \overline{1 + 1}$, (1); and $\overline{3 + 1} + 1 = 3 + \overline{1 + 1}$, (2).

But things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. [Prim. Prop.]

$$\therefore 3 + 2 = \overline{3 + 1} + 1. \text{ [Concl.] (3)}$$

Again $4 = 3 + 1$. [Def.]

But if the same thing be added to equals, the wholes are equal. [Prim. Prop.]

$$\therefore 4 + 1 = \overline{3 + 1} + 1. \text{ [Concl.] (4)}$$

The proof does not seem to be of a simple nature. In accordance, however, with Principle 2, we may conclude that it is absolutely certain that 3 and 2 make 5, if we assume (*only for the sake of argument*) that the primary propositions employed are true. And, in accordance with Principle 1, we may believe that it is absolutely certain that 3 and 2 make no other number besides 5.

The important point would appear then to be, to settle our primary propositions on irrefragable evidence, if such can be had. To establish a vast superstructure of inferential propositions so as to produce the sense of assured conviction will not be considered an impossible task, if only the first steps, the solid founda-

Again $3 + 2 = \overline{3 + 1} + 1$, (3); and $4 + 1 = \overline{3 + 1} + 1$, (4).

But things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. [Prim. Prop].

$\therefore 3 + 2 = 4 + 1$. [Concl.] (5)

Lastly $3 + 2 = 4 + 1$, (5); and $5 = 4 + 1$. [Def.]

But things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. [Prim. Prop.]

$\therefore 3 + 2 = 5$.

Q.E.D.

If we take for our definitions $2 = 1 + 1$, $3 = 1 + 1 + 1$, $4 = 1 + 1 + 1 + 1$, &c., we can arrive at the result more quickly. Untrammelled by the syllogistic form, the following is the process:—

$$\begin{aligned} 3 + 2 &= \overline{1 + 1 + 1} + \overline{1 + 1} \\ &= 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 \\ &= 5. \end{aligned}$$

Q.E.D.

In the full proof, four syllogisms would be required.

tion, be sure and certain. The essential difference, as regards the sense of assured conviction in the conclusions arrived at, between great thinkers, like Plato, Aristotle, Duns Scotus, Bacon, does not seem to have consisted so much in the methods they pursued, as in the foundations they laid, or professed to lay, or took for granted without examination. Bacon's method may have been more fruitful than Plato's, the researches of Aristotle of a more important nature than those of Duns Scotus ; but it would seem likely each would have been convinced by the arguments of the others, and would have assented to the conclusions of the others, if he could have accepted their premisses. It is true that the mind of man does not create. It is true also that an implicit reliance on the unaided deductive method does not appear to give room for any great advance in knowledge, inasmuch as the highest conclusions are, in essence, only a different way of formulating the hypothetical primal principles on which they depend, whereas the inductive method is perpetually introducing fresh fact, fresh experience, fresh observation—in other words, fresh stuff for the argumentative machine to work up and weave into the wrought fabric, whereby a more extensive, varied, useful, general result is arrived at. Herein there may be felt to be a great difference between the *value* of the earlier methods and the Baconian method ; but for the present purposes of our text, the *value* of the conclusions is not a matter of importance, only the

certainty of their truth. And it would appear that certainty can be arrived at by one method equally with the other.

If, then, all depends on the primary propositions, it becomes a matter of first importance to lay down primary propositions of the truth of which we are absolutely certain. If they cannot be logically proved to be true, what test shall we have of their truth?

It seems to me, that only one method of certifying the truth of a primary proposition has even the semblance of reality about it. It is an old method, presented here not even with a new face. It is, that that is true which is universally believed—*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*, to quote the celebrated maxim of Vincentius Lerinensis. The following two propositions will mark the force we desire to give to this maxim.

PRINCIPLE 4.—*If any proposition, everywhere, and by all men, always has been, and always would be, held to be true, that proposition is certainly true.*

PRINCIPLE 5.—*We can make no absolute assertion that any proposition is true which has been denied (by reasonable and sober men).*

On Principle 5 we will only observe at present, that the denial must be supposed to come from those who are not idiots or maniacs, nor from those inca-

pable of understanding the meaning of the words used or the force of a completed sentence. The denial must come from men who have comprehended the terms of the proposition, and they must be sober and honest. Otherwise, the denial is a denial in words, but not in substance. We exclude manifest fools, manifest children, and manifest hypocrites.

Of course the practical value of Principles 4 and 5 lies in their application to primary propositions. It having been acknowledged that an inferential proposition can be logically derived from a series of primary propositions, it would be idle to apply the above test to propositions which can be judged of so much more easily and certainly by better and surer methods. We will, therefore, assume in our further consideration of the above Principles, that they are restricted in their application to primary propositions. For instance, we shall not employ them as a test of the truth of the traditions of any Church, though St. Vincent himself applied his maxim with this object,¹ and it has since been used in religious controversy by other writers to the same end. Thus we should not think of appealing to it to prove the doctrine of Apostolic succession, because this is a matter the truth or falsehood of which rests on quite different

¹ The words of St. Vincent (ob. circa 450) are: 'In ipsâ item Catholicâ Ecclesiâ magnopere curandum est, ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.' St. Vincent appears to have originally employed this test as a weapon against Augustine's doctrines—he himself being a semi-Pelagian.

grounds, and can be settled independently of it. Moreover, as Chillingworth and others have pointed out, many religious doctrines which have rested on the surest basis of universal and early tradition have in the end been denied by Protestants and Catholics alike. What weight can be given to primitive tradition, and what authority attaches to common assent in matters which are in the domain of history or logical argument, will be considered particularly hereafter. But in any case we refrain from appealing to Principles 4 and 5 unless when dealing with primary propositions—propositions which cannot be logically proved, and for which we require some test of truth.

With this restriction, we now ask the question whether there are any primary propositions of which we can predicate the universal assent of Principle 4. Of course we can predicate nothing absolutely of the future, but, holding the *quod semper* on which Principle 4 is founded to apply only to the past and present, *even then*, are there any propositions for which Principle 4 is valid?

It is difficult to answer this question with an absolute affirmation. We cannot prove that there is any proposition which has *never* been denied by sober and reasonable men; and it is certainly true that the vast majority of propositions which have *generally* been held to be true have yet been denied by some one or more sober and reasonable persons. This is worth considering a little in detail.

Abraham Tucker, in his 'Light of Nature' which, if now somewhat 'behind the age,' is still exceedingly worth reading, has the following remark:—'Well persuaded as I am that two and two make four, if I were to meet with a person of credit, candour, and understanding, who should sincerely call it in question, I would give him a hearing; for I am not more certain of this than I am of the whole being greater than its part. And yet I could suggest some considerations that might seem to controvert this point.' He then proceeds to argue against the conclusion that the whole is greater than its part, in a manner which, if it does not command more than an amused incredulity, is yet particularly ingenious as a piece of metaphysical reasoning. Pascal, in his '*Pensées*,' has an argument somewhat of the same nature.¹

A well known mathematician defines parallel

¹ Even with respect to this most primary of primary propositions, that the whole is greater than its part, it must be clearly understood that it is untrue without due restrictions of the meaning applied to the terms of the proposition. For instance, it is true that if from a full glass of water a portion be taken, the remaining portion is less than the original quantity of water; but it is *also* true that if two equal volumes of different substances be chemically combined, the volume of the resulting compound *may* be less than either of the original volumes. It merely results from this that one must be careful to explain what one means by the proposition that the whole is greater than its part, not that the proposition is untrue; but a good example is thus afforded of the necessity for exceedingly careful thought and large experience before asserting a primary and general proposition, on the ground that it seems reasonable and that no instances are known to the contrary. The stories of the Indian prince who declared that it was impossible for water to become hard, and of the Englishman who said that no swan could have black feathers, do not surprise us (such assertions are

straight lines in such a way that he assumes that two or more straight lines may all pass through a given point, and all lie in one plane with another given straight line, and yet none of them cut the given straight line, though the lines be produced ever so far both ways.

Locke insists that such propositions as 'Whatever is, is,' 'It is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be,' are not 'innate ideas;' that it is not necessary that they should command instantaneous or universal assent.

Bishop Berkeley hesitated to affirm the existence of matter. There is no proof that aught exists but the 'Ego,' which forms for itself ideas of the 'Non-ego,' and calls it matter.

A large and many-sided school will reduce all ideas of good and evil, of right and wrong, to the instincts of happiness and unhappiness, of desire and self-preservation, or to the slow working processes of evolution and selection. And yet, perhaps, the most patent fact in the whole world of morals is the sense of responsibility, the promptings arising from the feelings of duty, the inextinguishable difficulty of duly explaining the word *ought*.

These instances are sufficient for the purpose, though a multitude of others might be adduced.

too common), but it does seem wonderful that a great philosopher like Plato could generalise so wildly and idly as to define a man as 'a naked biped,' and then to add, on exposition of failure by Diogenes, 'with broad nails.'

And here we will show how Euclid attempted to discriminate primary propositions into two classes, and examine whether his classification is sound. This most exact writer of one of the most exact of sciences; this teacher of the civilised world for more than two thousand years, whose name has become a synonym for the subject he taught, proceeds as follows:—

He lays down certain fundamental propositions under two heads—*κοινὰ ἐννόμια*, *common notions*, which may be translated *innate ideas*, and *αἰτήματα*, *axioms*, or propositions he and his reader are to agree to take for granted. He does not prove the *common notions*, because (according to him) they do not require proof, being assented to by all the reasoning races of men. For instance, two of these are ‘The whole is greater than its part;’ ‘If things are equal to the same thing, they are equal to one another.’ He would, it may be presumed, argue—“Whole,” “part,” and “greater,” being understood, no reasonable being can deny that “the whole is greater than its part.” The assent to this proposition is bound up integrally with the reasoning powers of man.’ But the axioms (according to him), take up a different position. He seems to argue, ‘My axioms do not command a necessary assent. I do not believe they can be proved; but, whether capable of proof or not, I am unable to prove them. If I could, I would. For instance, I can prove that two

sides of a triangle are greater than the third, and therefore this is no axiom. I prove it. If I could prove that "two straight lines which cut one another at one point and do not coincide, cannot cut one another again," I would prove it; if I could give a construction for drawing a straight line from any one given point to any other, I would give it. But I cannot; therefore, these are axioms to me. If you deny the truth of the first, or the possibility in any or all cases of the second, you are at liberty to do so, but farther you and I cannot travel in company. To reach my conclusions, you must assent not only to my *common notions*, but also to my axioms.¹

Now theoretically, and *à priori*, I should be inclined to consider Euclid's method of classification perfect. But practically it seems to break down. Practically it breaks down with him. Not only is there considerable doubt about one or more of his unproved propositions, whether they were placed by him among the *common notions* or the axioms; it is a matter of much more importance that even those who might agree that the classification is a possible one, would disagree (and have disagreed from the time of Proclus till now), in assigning the propositions

¹ Two explanatory remarks should here be made. First, that what we have written above has been founded on the original Text of Euclid, and not on the work of Dr. Robert Simson extensively studied in schools, and called 'The Elements of Euclid.' Next, that the explanation I have given above of the meaning of the expressions *κοινὰ ἐννόμια* and *αἰτήματα* has been disputed, though not to my mind successfully.

to the two classes. And if the system breaks down in this, the most exact of sciences, much more would it break down in other more complex branches of human research. Personally, I would gladly retain some such distinction as is sketched above. I would be glad to discriminate between propositions which have gained the *consensus* of mankind, as that the whole is greater than a part, and propositions which, whether true or false, are certainly not *common notions*, but are in their very nature unprovable, as that the world is under the direction of a Personal and Divine Being. But I believe the attempt to be an impossible one. I am not aware of any proposition that has not been controverted by reasonable assailants. I find that propositions not controverted in exact terms, are yet not held to be necessarily true, nor to command instantaneous assent. I am driven to the conclusion, that whether there be common notions or no, an assertion that there are, is one easily denied and likely to be denied.

But if these things are so, what becomes of our test embodied in Principles 4 and 5? The test would seem to be fallacious, because, as already pointed out, *quod semper* must *practically* be restricted to times past and present; it would also seem to be useless, because we have found it unsafe to assert that any proposition is and has been universally held. It would seem that no primary propositions can be proved; and that, if held to be true,

they cannot be considered to be common notions, but only axioms—only propositions assented to by those who desire to obtain a common stand-point. And, moreover, as every inferential proposition stands and falls with the primary propositions on which it rests, it would appear to follow that we cannot certify any single proposition as undoubtedly true.

And this conclusion I think we are driven to. Without philosophising on the fact, that in most important matters of life we are compelled to rely on the probable, and very often only on the possible, it may be confessed at once that it is not an agreeable conclusion to arrive at, but, if a true one, it must be faced. And is it not a true one?

It may be urged, Your test is not a good one. You have acknowledged that it is fallacious and useless. There must be some infallible test of the truth of a primary proposition. To which at present I can only answer (further on I will return to this point and make an ampler statement), that I cannot even conceive of any other test. If it is not a good one in the sense that it is not a perfect success, it is a good one in that there is no other.

For the test is still a test, and a real test. It is trustworthy as far as it goes. Those primary propositions which most nearly satisfy the test are held to be true with the closest approach to certainty.¹

¹ I presume that the statement in the text will not be denied, and that those who accept it will not think it can be proved. It may,

And if no such thing as absolute certainty can be arrived at, we frequently arrive at a probability so strong as practically to amount to certainty. It is to be presumed that few who believe that there is a Personal God would insist that it was a *common notion*. On the other hand, almost all would allow that the proposition, whether true or false, could not be proved.¹ But these admissions would not alter their convictions or their actions. The *feeling* of

however, be supposed that I have assumed the truth of the statement without sufficient examination, and that I ought to explain *why* primary propositions which most nearly satisfy the test of universal assent are held to be true with the closest approach to certainty. I will attempt, therefore, though with considerable diffidence, to make one or two suggestions by way of explanation. According to the theory of 'natural selection' and of 'survival of the fittest,' there is in nature a gradual growth of physical, mental, and spiritual phenomena, whereby a higher and still higher type of excellence is evolved and rendered possible. Thus I hold that elementary truths have been slowly built up into the fabric of our common humanity, and when at last they have become permanent and we can apply to them the test of universal assent, they take their place as axioms. Thus also it appears to me that, in the slow course of secular development, the relegation of truth to the axiomatic class may still be going on. The elementary truths of 'pre-historic' man, or of savages, have been probably few and of small value, but the *consensus hominum* is a hereditary gift to mankind bequeathed to us by the long line of our forefathers, and from its judgment there is only unavailing appeal.

I know that it may be said that experience and observation are a test of axiomatic propositions, and I partly agree. I think it very likely that the proposition that the whole is greater than its part commands assent, partly because every part that is known is less than its whole, and no part is known that is greater than its whole. But (for many reasons to be found in the text) I think the other test is a more certain one, though verification by the second test is useful and not to be despised.

¹ This proposition is considered more at large in Chapter IV.

certainty would be as great. Even if we are not certain that the sun will rise to-morrow, this want of certainty does not interfere in any sense with our actions. And in the same manner, men of strong impulse and large sympathies would still die for their religion, their loves, their duty, their country, even if they acknowledged that they were unable to predicate any proposition about the word *ought*. To say that we are not certain that the whole is greater than its part is a metaphysical form of speech that does not greatly disturb us. The proposition must, it is true, be called an axiom, but that will not alter our practical relationship to it.

These considerations have brought us to our 6th Principle, as follows :

PRINCIPLE 6.—*Primary propositions which most nearly satisfy the test of Principle 4 are to be most surely held to be true.*

For the future we will designate these six Principles as axioms, and call them Primary General Axioms. We thereby admit that we do not attempt to prove them (or believe that they can be proved), and that we do not assert that they may not be reasonably denied. But, at the same time, it is our contention that they are true; *here* and *by us* they are held to be true. We find it difficult even to conceive that they are not true: we say that the probability

that they are true approximates as nearly as possible to absolute certainty. And that is what we mean by calling them Axioms. If anyone thinks these propositions can be proved to be untrue, or if anyone declines to accept them as true, here we must part company with him. But we ourselves believe them to be true, and agree to bind ourselves to grant the truth of any propositions logically deduced from them.

We will here tabulate them :

Primary General Axioms.

1. Mutually contradictory propositions cannot both be true ; neither can a self-contradictory proposition be true.

2. The truth of certain propositions having been conceded, there are logical processes whereby definite conclusions founded on these propositions can be absolutely proved to be true.

3. There are propositions generally assumed to be true which cannot logically be proved to be true.

4. If any proposition, everywhere, and by all men, always has been, and always would be, held to be true, that proposition is certainly true.

5. We can make no absolute assertion that any proposition is true which has been denied by reasonable and sober men.

6. No proposition is certainly true, but those primary propositions which most nearly satisfy the

test of Axiom 4 are to be most surely held to be true.

At this point we will consider more in detail the results arrived at. We have given above a proof that $2 + 3 = 5$. Now there is no doubt that all people are sincerely convinced of the truth of this proposition, but it would be an interesting matter for inquiry on what they ground this conviction, whether on a process of argument, or on the fact that 'they have been told;' whether, in other words they 'see it,' or believe it on authority or tradition, as many people believe the Bible is the Word of God on authority or tradition. Of course if they have proved to themselves that $2 + 3 = 5$, they have (or may have) good grounds for their conviction; if they have used it with other kindred propositions and thereby established satisfactory results, they have some ground for their conviction; but if they take it for granted on authority, seeing it can be proved, and is not a primary proposition, the basis of their conviction is an insecure one, and they have been using the test *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*, where it is inapplicable. It is another question whether a person, having proved to his own satisfaction that $2 + 3$ do not make 5 should not see cause to reconsider the steps of his argument in the face of the universal opinion to the contrary.

I will next take, in illustration of Axioms 4 and 5,

the instance of a proposition that was once universally held, whereas now the converse is as universally held.

For many ages men believed (as far as they had any opinion at all) that the sun went round the earth. Was that a proof that the sun went round the earth? I think that the simple fact, that all men believed that the sun went round the earth established, *à priori*, a very strong presumption that it was so ; much more likely that it was so than if some men had believed differently, and opposed the statement. The belief was founded on the evidence of the senses, which, on the whole, were an excellent guide in most of the affairs of life ; and it was better to believe on the evidence of the senses than to believe on many weaker authorities which have held man's mind in chains. It was a great thing, that here each man did believe, did not fashion to believe, did not believe by proxy, did not believe because his teachers or his books told him to believe, did not believe because he did *not* understand, but because he *did* understand—I repeat, that *à priori* there was exceedingly strong evidence that the sun went round the earth ; it was an evidence that appealed to all men, high and low, learned and unlearned, thoughtful and careless of thought. *Now* we believe that the earth goes round the sun, but now, *also*, many of us believe by proxy

Here the test of Axiom 4, as far as it bears on the proposition in question, is apparently fallacious.

Are we then to throw up Axiom 4, or can any explanation be offered ?

The explanation has already been given. It is, that the object of having such a test at all is to apply it to propositions that cannot logically be proved (as in Axiom 3), and not to inferential propositions that may be and should be founded on a course of strict reasoning. Whether the sun goes round the earth or the earth goes round the sun is a question to be decided on the merits of Axiom 2, and the test of Axiom 4 is inadmissible. It is a dangerous and a vicious course to apply the insecure test of universal consent, even if it hold good, as long as we can stand on the firm ground of logical argument.

And this brings me to my last remark, in answer to a solid objection that may be raised. It may be urged that the opinion of a few wise men is far more likely to be true, far more worthy of credence, than the uniform, undeviating belief, undisturbed by any shadow of doubt, of an exceedingly preponderating majority of the human race. '*Athanasius contra mundum.*' Witchcraft was once all but universally held to be a *vera causa* of natural phenomena, not only among savage tribes, but throughout Christianised and civilised Europe ; not only by unlearned peasants and narrow-minded clergy of all denominations, but even by the author of the liberally conceived 'Religio Medici' and of 'Vulgar Errors.' Yet there were a few who held themselves free from the gross

and cruel superstition of the times, and who, if their voice could have been heard earlier, would have cancelled many a blood-stained page of history. Is the test *quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, to be considered to exonerate the memory of all who closed their eyes to facts, and who ignorantly thought they were doing God service? Or are the few wise to be looked up to as a safer repository of truth than the many foolish and unthinking and prejudiced? Is the gregarious instinct of assent to the commonly uttered—is unscientific acceptance, at first sight, without precaution and without examination, of the apparently manifest, a good guide to truth or certainty? How far is it true, if true at all, that the repetition of a proposition from mouth to mouth makes it more credible?

We have divided propositions into two classes—primary propositions and inferential propositions. We have defined inferential propositions to be those which result by correct logical inference from the assent to other more elementary propositions or primary propositions. The course of argument may be, and in fact generally is, long and difficult, requiring trained minds, well guided and vigorous imaginations, delicate and accurate investigations, much knowledge of facts, large sympathies, a careful and balanced memory, a sense of proportion in estimating the relative importance of the elements of a question. A long sustained series of arguments frequently demands the learned leisure of a lifetime,

and either communion with kindred spirits, or the contemplative indwellings nurtured by solitary meditation. A brilliant sudden upward grasp at a new truth does not usually come except painfully, with much previous travail of soul and brooding of spirit. The work that rebuilds and renovates the world is often accomplished in its *apparent* phases in a year or so, because the kernel has been matured, the seed has been sown in the silence or darkness of long years of boyhood and early manhood, and in the deep-seated final stage of fruit-bearing conviction. Columbus may be said to have discovered America before his interview with the Court of Spain. Mahomet's forty years of failure and inactivity do not count for nothing in forecasting the measure of his final irresistible triumph. Such works are the works of the few wise, and not of the many simple. And the world must and does accept the conclusions of the few wise, must and does accept the traditions of the elders, must and does listen, however tardily, to the encroaching reforms and novel utterances of the few energetic and original. In this sense, it might be said truly *Vox paucorum, vox Dei*, and that the multitude has to frame its beliefs by proxy.

But there is a sense in which it is true that *Vox populi vox Dei est*. Primary propositions are the common property of all men; and frequently the rough *common sense*, as it is well called, of the people,

at least in things social, religious, moral, and political, has had to dictate to philosophers, logicians, priests, statesmen, and those whose tendency it is to keep up an artificial state of society. Dictate it will in the long run ; and if not heard with change of way and purpose, it will make itself heard in blood and fire and the many-tongued voices of revolution. Theologians may spin their fine arguments, which have become entangled with their own hypotheses, and for many a long year have cut themselves free from the eternal primary truths, but the *vox populi*, ignorant and careless of the nature of the fallacies, will sternly bid teachers and teaching to stand aside. Religion may shake her head, but the *vox populi* will admonish her in unmistakable language to amend her ways or die. The single legacy bequeathed to the human race in the mass is these same primary propositions, and again and again in the history of the world the complex result of civilised life and action and thought has to be verified or amended by reference to them ; so that in this sense it is true that *vox populi, vox Dei est.*

And indeed, in things social, political, moral, and religious, it will very generally be found that the lasting work of the few wise and good has consisted in testing the elaborate and artificial rules of society by immediate reference to elementary and common principles, and in rejecting all that do not stand the test. New insight, new facts, a more extensive

survey, *not new principles*. The reform which is accomplished by the few does not listen to arguments; it measures all things by the measuring rule of axiomatic truths, and retains and refuses authoritatively. A reformer like Ezekiel does not care for tradition, or 'orthodoxy,' or fine-spun argument; he goes back at once to the elemental facts of life and finds his key-note there. 'The sins of the fathers visited on the children?' he says, 'you have been told *that*? You read the Law of Moses *so*? I tell you nay. Every soul that sins shall die, and every soul that does righteousness shall live.' 'You are not *responsible*?' he says; 'it is not *your* fault that you have lived such evil lives, but *God's*, who has not dealt justly with you? I tell you nay. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should live. It is *you* that are unjust.'

Now a reform of this nature is only successful when it is apprehended and appreciated by the multitude who thereby help to carry on the work. The *vox paucorum* becomes the *vox populi*, as, originally, it was founded on the *vox populi*.

Of all this more hereafter in its proper place. At present I have merely desired to explain that the argument of universal assent is only wisely and fairly applied to axiomatic truths and principles; that only with reference to them is it true that the voice of the many is the voice of truth. It is fully admitted that the words of the wise should (as indeed

they do) overbalance the babble of the simple in a general way ; but what is insisted on is, that, finally, the words of the wise must be themselves verified by the test of these same axiomatic principles which are founded on universal assent, and on no other foundation.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCIENCES.

THE subject before us is the limits of knowledge in all matters that engage human attention. And therefore, although I wish to restrict myself as far as possible to man as a moral agent, it will be necessary, first of all, to consider him with regard to other studies which occupy his mind.

Beginning, then, with the Sciences, let us venture a definition of a Science.

Any subject on which the mind can exercise itself, when submitted to a methodical course of reasoning, is called a Science.

Sciences may be divided into groups: *Exact sciences*, *physical* or *natural sciences*, *mechanical sciences* (in which science is devoted to utilitarian ends, as agriculture, the art of building), *æsthetic sciences* (or *The Arts*), and *moral sciences*. In this chapter we shall restrict ourselves to exact sciences and physics.

The exact sciences are *Arithmetic* and *Geometry*—the Sciences of *number* and *space*. These are also called *pure Mathematics*. The physical sciences,

considered in their most rigid form, as a branch of Mathematics, with the requisite mathematical restrictions, are called *mixed Mathematics*. Between pure Mathematics and mixed Mathematics we shall find that there is a strong demarcating line.

Arithmetic starts with the definitions that one and one are two, two and one are three, three and one are four, and so on ; and with sundry axioms, such as that, if two numbers are equal to the same number, they are equal to each other. On a small substratum of definitions and elementary axioms the whole gigantic superstructure of number, which I have called Arithmetic, but which really includes all the *Calculuses*, and any fresh 'Calculus' that may hereafter be invented, has been raised.

Geometry is the science of shape or form, of space limited in one or more directions. It has also its definitions and axioms. The most comprehensive and complex geometrical propositions are built upon them. *Perspective* is a branch of Geometry, and the laws of perspective are mathematical, and are in no sense dependent on the artistic imagination.

Arithmetic and Geometry lead to absolute certainty of conclusion as closely as it is possible to conceive. The reason is that the axioms are of such a nature that they are assented to (1) *by all reasonable men*, and (2) unhesitatingly, without meditation and with no after misgivings, and (3) that they

depend on *exact* definitions.¹ Take a well-established proposition of Geometry—the volumes of spheres vary as the cubes of their diameters. Not only do all mathematicians agree that this is true ; not only, however often, or however changefully the result be tested by actual trial, will it be found to be true in each case ; but, especially, this is to be observed, that if two geometers have arrived at the result by different processes, they will each assent to every step of the process of the other. Moreover, though there was a time when this proposition was not known, there never was a time when it was doubted or denied, or when a contrary proposition was set up. It is by considerations of the above nature in this and similar instances that we feel we arrive at what is called *mathematical certainty*. Take one more instance from perspective. Let us suppose a mathematician required to cut on glass with a diamond a picture of a certain prospect—houses, trees, hill, and vale—exactly as seen through the glass held in a given position between the mathematician and the prospect. Let his position as regards the prospect and the glass be known. Next, let the ground be surveyed and let true measurements be taken of

¹ 'Nature abhors a vacuum,' was an 'axiom' accepted by all reasonable men, and without misgiving. It explained the facts of nature, and the contradictory of it was not conceivable. But it was an axiom of *Physics*, not of the *exact sciences*, and it depended for its value on the definition of 'Nature,' the definition of which could only be arrived at (if at all) by observation and experience.

all the lines and curves of the prospect, with their relative positions with respect to each other. Now let the mathematician retire to his study with the knowledge of all these facts, and he will be able by the mathematical rules of perspective to scratch the lines and curves of his picture on the glass, so that, if the glass be held in the position marked for it, a spectator, placing himself where the mathematician was supposed to have seen the prospect originally, will perceive that each line and curve of the picture exactly covers each line and curve of the prospect.

Of course an artist does not go to work in this way. Our mathematician is striving after accuracy, and nothing more ; whereas the artist strives more or less to produce a faithful resemblance of the landscape before him, but, above all, to produce a result which satisfies the eye and the imagination ; which shall give true pleasure to the beholder. As to the elements of which this sentiment of pleasure consists, a few suggestions will be offered in the following chapter.

We now come to the physical sciences, considered as a branch of Mathematics. Our sample shall be the most fundamental of them—*Mechanics*.

All physics deal with matter. Mixed mathematics are mathematics applied to matter. Mechanics is the mathematical science of *force* ; i.e. of some cause which excites or tends to excite motion in matter. Here, as before, we start with definitions and axioms ; here, as before, the most complex results depend

absolutely on the truth or falseness of the axioms. The chain of evidence is complete. All depends on the first links.

But the axioms are of a different character from those we have been already considering. We have said of the axioms of Arithmetic and Geometry that all reasonable men unhesitatingly and immediately accept them. But this is not true of the axioms of Mechanics; indeed, to some extent, I suspect the contrary is true. Take for example Newton's First Law of Motion—'A particle at rest will continue at rest, and a particle in motion will continue to move in a straight line with uniform velocity, so long as no external force acts upon the particle.' I imagine that this proposition, when originally presented to a reasonable man, unless of exceptionally robust intellect, so far from being accepted without hesitation or meditation, would stagger and confound him. But after due meditation and consideration, a profound sense of the necessary truth of this law would supervene; so profound and so absolute that only a historical reminiscence would remain of his dead self confounded and staggered. He could not easily reform for himself that previous state of doubt and denial, so complete is the change in his ideas.

Newton's Law was not always acknowledged to be true. It was not enunciated till many ages of acute investigators had passed away. It required a great genius to discover and formulate it. The untrained

mind does not readily assent to it. On the contrary, the general untutored belief is embodied in the expression *Vis Inertiæ*, or in the false law—A particle in motion will always in time come to rest, unless it is acted on by an external force to keep it in motion.

The confusion arises from the difficulty of dissociating the idea of matter from the idea of force. All matter that comes under the cognisance of our senses is *at all times* and everywhere influenced by force. To judge of the law, we have to conceive a single particle *in vacuo* in limitless space, and by combining this conception with experimental facts, the law is grasped and its truth acknowledged.

And yet the law is axiomatic. It cannot be proved. It can, it is true, be partially illustrated by various suggestive experiments. But, when once granted, it is granted firmly and without any after misgivings, and the sense of certainty finally arrived at has been denominated *moral certainty*.

Mechanics is a vast and difficult science. It has many branches, according to the nature of the 'matter' considered, whether it be a particle, or a rigid body, or a flexible string, or an elastic body, or an elastic string, or a liquid, or a gaseous fluid, or any combinations of these ; or, again, whether it be matter at rest or matter in motion ; or, again, whether motion is considered simply as motion, or as resulting from some law of force. Many of the problems of Mechanics are of very great complexity, but all of them

depend either on axiomatic truths similar to the above, or on other unprovable (certainly unproved) laws or principles, which are not axiomatic, but which are no less certainly true, and of which we will give examples immediately. Similar remarks might be made on the other physical sciences—Optics, Light, Sound, Heat, Magnetism, Electricity, Chemistry, &c.¹ These sciences tend to depart more or less from a rigidly mathematical treatment, till they become greatly or wholly experimental sciences. The results obtained, so far as they are derived from examinations into cause and effect, depend either on *axiomatic principles* or on *well-established laws*, or on more or less probable *hypotheses* which (whether true or false) will explain the facts observed. We have already given an instance of an *axiomatic* physical law. We have intimated above that we cannot conceive of a single particle in limitless space, if at rest, beginning to move; if in motion, altering its velocity or direction of motion. The particle could not *fall*, because no meaning can be given to the word ‘fall’ in considering *one* particle in space. The moving particle could not change its direction or velocity ‘for want of the sufficient reason,’ *i.e.* there is no reason why it should incline its course one way more than another, or

¹ I exclude from present consideration the sciences which deal with animal and vegetable *life*, with the history of the globe, or of species; as Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Psychology, Geology, Physical Geography, Philology, Ethnology, Political Economy, and others. I also exclude what I have called above the Mechanical Sciences.

retard its velocity rather than accelerate it. We will next consider the difference between a well-established axiom, such as this, and a hypothesis. Take an instance of a hypothesis once believed to be an axiom, and not a hypothesis, and now recognised as absolutely false. For many ages the universal belief was that 'Nature abhors a vacuum.' If a reason were demanded, the answer would be something of this sort: 'It is evident. There are no such things as vacuums in nature. The principle explains many observed facts. Try to make a vacuum, and you will fail.' But the time came when Torricelli tried to make a vacuum, and indubitably succeeded, and the whole theory, the belief of ages, was overthrown.

Let us now consider well-established physical laws that are not axioms; let us consider how far we can lay claim to certainty of the truth of such laws, and note the difference between them and ingenious hypotheses. We will take two instances; one from the Theory of Light, the other the Universal Law of Gravitation.

Newton assumed that light consisted of luminous particles moving in straight lines, and on this hypothesis explained the facts that he observed. Dr. Young, in modern times, has developed the theory that the sensation of light is caused by wave-like movements of an impalpable medium between the sun and the earth, and has explained the facts that he observed in accordance with this theory. Both

explanations cannot be true. If either is true, which is true, and how are we to decide? Newton's hypothesis is (I believe) now abandoned by all;¹ but why, if it logically accounted for the facts?

In the first place, Newton did not know so many or so varied facts as have been found out in later times. The perfection of instruments and the invention of fresh ones have vastly multiplied our means of observation, have given us a deeper insight into the workings of nature, and have enabled us to combine experiments so as to obtain in many cases an inexhaustible storehouse of verifications. Newton's hypothesis did not explain the simple facts he was aware of without certain modifications, and it necessitated farther explanations to suit difficulties as they arose. It is true the modifications and explanations were ingenious and not improbable, but they *were* modifications and explanations; nor would the facts observed later fit in with his hypothesis without still more serious straining. Whereas the undulatory theory fitted all facts with equal ease—fitted old facts, and fitted new facts discovered after the theory had been promulgated; nay, more, it had all the

¹ While this work has been passing through the press, Mr. Crookes has been reading before the Royal Society his long expected paper on Light in connection with 'Ultra-gaseous' matter. The facts he has discovered appear to point to the molecular theory of light, and he himself seems inclined to revert to Newton's hypothesis. One hardly dares venture to surmise that these new facts may after all be found to be not incompatible with the later and well-established theory of Young and Fresnel.

vigour of natural or real life; it harmonised with kindred sciences; it suggested and blessed new methods of research. Like an inspired prophet of old, it predicted and foreshadowed the coming truth. Sound and Heat responded naturally and harmoniously to the secret spell of the law. It was a key to fit all wards. Considerations like these, accumulated and accumulating, meeting no check or hindrance, compel us, on the one hand, certainly to reject the Newtonian hypothesis; on the other hand, certainly to accept the wave-hypothesis as a true law of nature. As far as we can ever arrive at certainty we arrive at it here.¹

For our second instance, let us turn to Astronomy and to the Law of Universal Gravitation.

Ptolemy taught that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that round it moved in order the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, the other planets, the stars. Tycho Brahé, about 1580, accepted this teaching in its main features, with some important modifications. Copernicus (1543), following the earlier doctrine of Pythagoras, taught that the sun was the centre of what we consistently call the Solar System. *Now these three teachings equally explained the real facts observed. In accordance with any of them exact pre-*

¹ The above observations do not imply that the undulatory theory of light tells us the whole truth; only that it is true as far as it goes. Some large formula may yet be enunciated of which this theory is only a partial expression.

dictions of eclipses, conjunctions, &c., were made. Yet only one at least of the teachings can be true.

Again: the disciples of Ptolemy assumed the sun to move round the earth; first in a circle. As that did not give the exact place of the sun in the heavens at any given time, they assumed that the sun moved in a small circle whose centre was a movable point in the circumference of the first circle. To obtain still closer accuracy, they then assumed the sun to move in a still smaller circle whose centre was a movable point in the circumference of the second circle, and so on, till such continuous assumptions indicated sufficiently approximately the position of the sun at any time. A similar treatment was applied to the moon and the different planets. This complex group of perfectly arbitrary assumptions found expression in the terms cycles and epicycles, orbs and spheres; and, however hideously incongruous, accurately accounted for such phenomena as the naked eye could observe. To this blundering theory Milton alludes in a well-known passage of the 'Paradise Lost':—

He (God) his fabric of the heavens
Hath left to their disputes; perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, . . . how they will gird the sphere
With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb.

But Kepler was not satisfied with the epicycle theory. He, a most laborious man, found its laborious

monstrosity incredible; incredible as a fact, and monstrous as a working formula. Taking the eccentric planet Mars as the object of his investigations, and using Tycho Brahé's tables of its observed places in the heavens, with exceeding patience and by the simple method of rejecting various hypotheses which did not fit in with the facts of the case, by dogged determination and by courageous intellectual honesty rather than by skill or intuitive insight or acute reasoning, he hit upon his first happy discovery, that Mars moved round the sun in an ellipse.¹

Here, then, we have three theories of the order of succession of the planetary bodies, and two theories of orbicular movements, and any of these theories will give the true relative motions of the different bodies of the solar system at any time. We will not stay to mention why the Copernican order and the elliptic orbit were in the end pronounced to demonstrate the real as well as the seeming facts of the case. The final and irrevocable decision of the judgment has been pronounced on similar grounds to those which determined it in the case of the two theories of Light. Many arguments more or less convincing, some of them of exceeding and overwhelming weight, will immediately occur to the reader. The sum of them will be found invincible. The only point worthy of a moment's notice is that the *tardy growth* of adhesion

¹ This was in 1609, the year of Galileo's invention of the telescope. Kepler had adopted the Copernican system.

to the Copernican system may be said to be due solely to religious doubts and to traditions founded on notions of the plenary inspiration of the Bible—to the necessity of being orthodox, and to the fear of persecution or the Inquisition. Very few men were capable of forming an opinion at all on such matters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ; and many who rejected the Ptolemaic system either kept their opinions to themselves or found it convenient to retract them. It was not well nor easy to be a martyr to scientific truth. Men were willing to suffer for ‘the truth,’ not for truth ; that is, they were willing to suffer for maintaining certain theological beliefs bound up with man’s fallible judgment, not for maintaining what they felt assured was the truth as regards God’s natural laws.

Thus, then, before the close of the seventeenth century, men held it to be as certain as anything could be that the sun was the centre of the solar system, round which the planets revolved ; and, similarly, the attendant moons round their respective planets ; and that the undisturbed orbits of the planets round the sun, and of the satellites round their planets, were true ellipses. It was at that time agreed, and has never since been seriously disputed, that the real motions of the heavenly bodies were so, and not otherwise. *And all this conclusion was arrived at without knowing the cause, with hardly even an attempt to discover the cause.*

But in Newton arose the philosopher who, knowing *what was*, asked and solved the question *how* it was. The invention of the telescope had enabled astronomers to observe more closely and to record more accurately ; and making use of the vast storehouse of facts accumulated by his predecessors, Newton evolved his law of universal gravitation—that the mutual attraction of two bodies varies as the inverse square of the distance between them.

This was one of the most gigantic strides ever taken by the human intellect. Not like the patient, empiric, eight-years' child-birth of Kepler ; it was a Minerva sprung full armed from the brain of a Jupiter. It was not a proposition capable of proof ; and yet (to return to our oft-quoted formula) it was as certain as anything could be. Just consider the successively increasing difficulty experienced in laying hold of and assenting to the axiom that two straight lines cannot cut in more than one point ; to Newton's axiomatic First Law of Motion ; to Kepler's first law ; to Young's Wave Theory of Light ; and to the Law of Universal Gravitation : yet they are all equally certain.

But how is certainty arrived at, and, taking as a crucial instance the Law of Gravitation, by what steps of continuous conviction ? It will be worth while to consider this point in detail, at the risk of saying again what may have been said before.

1. The Law of Gravitation explains all visible motions depending on 'gravitation.' It equally explains the fall of a stone, the motion of the tides, and the most complex motions of the heavenly bodies.

2. It justifies, combines, and gives coherence to the Copernican system of the order of the heavenly bodies, and Kepler's laws relating to their observed motion in the heavens.¹

3. It does not require modification or amendment as fresh facts are observed. Each fresh fact gives a fresh verification. All fresh knowledge implies further illustration. More perfect instruments, as they diminish the amount of error in observation, so they demonstrate more fully the absolute truth of the law.

4. We have said that the undisturbed orbit of a planet round the sun is a true ellipse. But a planet is not influenced only by the attraction of the sun; the planets attract each other (in a far less degree), and mutually draw each other out of the simple elliptic path. The 'disturbances' or 'perturbations' of the moon (regarded as a satellite of the earth) are (comparatively) very great. This is because the moon, though principally obeying its great controlling centre, the earth, is yet strongly acted upon by the vast mass of the sun, not to speak of the perturbations caused by other planets either near or large. All

¹ Kepler discovered *three* laws with regard to the planetary orbits; *one* we have mentioned; *all three* are equally explained by Newton's law.

these perturbations, large and small, caused by the known influences of the known masses of planets in known positions, can be explained by the Law of Gravitation ; so also the perturbations of the other planets can be explained.

5. The Law of Gravitation, like all living principles, does not simply explain that which we know ; it enables us to foretell that which will be ; to predict that which would be under altered circumstances ; *to discover the unknown and unsuspected cause of an observed effect.*

This last is the very key-stone of proof, and it has here crowned the arch of evidence in the most marvellous and triumphant manner. Further proof was hardly needed, but here it was in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. It had been a great thing to be able to say, ‘ The Law of Gravitation assures us that the existence of Mars in a certain position *ought* to produce a certain perturbation in the path of the moon ; and such a perturbation (neither more nor less) there really is.’ But it was an enormously greater step to be able to say, ‘ There is a certain perturbation in the path of Uranus which is not caused (according to the Law of Gravitation) by the influence of any known planet in any possible position. If, then, the Law of Gravitation is true, there must be some undiscovered planet of a certain mass in a certain quarter of the heavens which has caused this perturbation. I will, therefore, work out what

the mass of the planet must be, and where it must be situated, to produce this perturbation ; I will then put up my telescope in the proper position and proclaim my discovery of a new planet.'

Surely the oft-quoted Aladdin's Lamp never did anything more wonderful than this ! Yet was it done. The inverse problem—an investigation of wonderful complexity and delicacy—was worked out to the required accuracy of approximation, and Neptune was discovered on the field of the telescope. It is now an old and oft-told tale, but it is an immortal one. And, above all, it is this last evidence which makes us as certain of the Law of Gravitation as we can be of anything.¹

Here we will conclude our remarks on physics *considered as a mathematical study* ; i.e. with certain theoretical restrictions of perfection not met with in life. The *mathematical* study of physics supposes *perfect* rigidity of bodies, *perfect* flexibility of strings,

¹ It should be observed that the formula of the inverse square of the distance fails to tell us anything when the distance between the two objects is inappreciable. For two masses indefinitely small, and indefinitely near each other, the law is not *untrue* ; it is valueless. The determination of attraction becomes a question of chemistry, and chemical laws come into play. Whether some great natural law may not hereafter be enunciated (and already some ingenious guesses have been put forward in a tentative way) which shall combine the law of gravitation, the chemical laws of combination, and other obscure laws of electricity and magnetism, is an enticing problem not yet seeming likely to receive solution ; but if such a law should be discovered, it would not remain less a fact that the law of gravitation was absolutely true in all cases to which it applied.

perfect conditions of fluidity, *perfect* vacuums, or if a medium, *perfect* homogeneity of that medium, *perfect* smoothness, or if roughness, *exact* conditions of roughness, *perfect* continuity of curvature, and so on ; none of which conditions are found in nature. The conclusions, therefore, of physics, mathematically considered, however certain, can only be tested (except in the case of Astronomy), imperfectly and approximately by actual experience. But it may be asked how far our mathematical and theoretical conclusions can be modified to meet the actual facts of nature in its irregular variety of unexpected and half-and-half conditions ; how far we can arrive at certainty with regard to the real matter, the real substance of the universe that we see about us. For instance :— How long will some particular wall stand upright ? How long will some particular beam resist a certain pressure laid upon it ? What amount of resistance will some particular vessel experience in passing with a certain head of steam through a known sea (salt, sea-weeds, barnacles, viscosity, all taken into account), with wind and tide in given directions and strength ? What will be the state of the weather to-morrow week at Greenwich ? In what time will the crumbling effect of weather (rain, wind, frost, clouds, &c.) reduce the topmost peak of Helvellyn one foot in height ? And so on. The answer is that *practically* we cannot reply *at all* in any worthy manner to some such questions, and to other such questions we can only

reply imperfectly and approximately, with numberless possibilities of our imperfect and approximate reply being completely negated by unforeseen combinations of conditions; but that *theoretically, if we knew everyone of the conditions, and had skill to work out the problem*, we should be enabled to foretell (to take one instance) the force and direction of the wind this day twelvemonth at Greenwich *with exactly the same amount of certainty* with which we now foretell an eclipse and the nature of an eclipse a thousand years hence, or can work back to a historical eclipse of a thousand years ago.

Our prayers for fair weather are founded on our practical ignorance. Already we know sufficiently well (in words which the late Duke of Cambridge is reported to have uttered) that 'it is no use praying for rain while this east wind lasts;' but that saying, or something like that saying, marks the limits of our knowledge now, and probably will mark them for many a long year. We do not pray against eclipses. And I presume, and trust, that if some eminent scientific man should demonstrate that in the year 1979 the world would be destroyed by a comet, the nauseous vapours of whose tail should suffocate us, and the hard kernel of whose nucleus should crush us out of all interest in the subsequent proceedings of our planet—I presume, and trust, that the Archbishop of Canterbury of that date would not be requested by the Government to draw up a

form of prayer against such an inconvenient result. We do not pray against what we have fully determined in our minds is inevitable.

This chapter shall be closed with one remark on a saying frequently heard which naturally connects itself with the present remarks.

It is a popular expression that 'so and so is as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow.' Now, does this popular phrase also express a scientific truth? Is it a certain thing that the sun will rise to-morrow?

The popular argument is an argument from induction only: 'The sun rose yesterday and the day before yesterday, and so on continuously while I was a child and while my father and grandfather were children, and still further on in times long ago mentioned in books. Of course it will rise to-morrow.'

This is a good argument on which to found a *probable* prediction. The recurrence of an event at periodic times indicates a possible law. If I hear that A. called on Monday at 7 o'clock to see me, and on Tuesday at the same hour, though I know nothing else, who he is, or what he wants, or why he comes, I think it *possible* he will call on Wednesday at seven o'clock. If he has called every day for a week or a month, I think it *very likely* that he will call the next day. But if he has called for a year, much more for fifty years, I *feel sure* that he will call the next day. I have no right to argue further.

He may die. The unknown and unguessed cause of his coming may cease. If a savage, seeing the continuous movements of the hands of a clock on the wall, and, ignorant of the fact that the clock was wound up every seventh day, should argue that the clock was a creature of life and would go on for ever, he would be building his argument on no feeble foundation. And the same is the foundation for the popular argument about the sun. Only the popular sentiment acknowledges that a time may come, *will* come, when the sun will not rise. But still the argument would proceed as follows:—Granting that there will be a time when the sun will not rise again, the chances are exceedingly great that that time will not be to-morrow. I *believe* I shall be alive to-morrow, but the proverbial uncertainty of the advent of death makes me hesitate to affirm it. On the other hand, I *affirm assuredly* that the sun will rise to-morrow.

It seems, therefore, that the popular argument, when gauged to its uttermost, merely asserts a very great probability (so great as not to be measurable), that the sun will rise to-morrow. Will science enable us to assert this still more strongly? I answer that science, though it does not deny that a time may come when ‘the sun will no longer rise,’ asserts absolutely (says that it is as certain as anything can be) that the sun will rise to-morrow.

Astronomy tells an unbroken story of undeviating law—of multitudinous undeviating laws. It is a

story of cycle regularly following cycle, of exact order of precession and periodicities, of unhesitating prediction absolutely fulfilled. On earth we meet with many breaks in our cycles (or seem to do so). The most regular order is often broken into ; in many events only disorder, chance, lawlessness seem to prevail (how far this is only *seeming*, how far this apparent prevalence merely suggests ignorance of the complex secular law, this is not the place to enquire). But in the heavens nothing is extravagant, exorbitant, or enormous, to use words whose earliest meanings express the exact idea I wish to convey. If, then, the sun should cease to rise, that fact would denote a cause. That cause would be in operation now, even if the effect was not fully produced for billions on billions of years. A few thousand years would make known the cause and the period of operation. But *no sudden change is possible*. In the heavens the slow centuries cast their lengthened shadows before them. And we assert scientifically that it is as certain as anything can be that the sun will rise to-morrow.

‘But there is no word of God in all this.’ On the contrary, there is the good news of a God of order :

The first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial but by general laws.

And, indeed, (without here discussing what is meant by a miracle, but only agreeing that the word has some definite meaning), to those even who ‘believe

in miracles,' the staying of the sun by Joshua upon Gibeon, and of the moon in the valley of Ajalon, has seemed well-nigh incredible. Of course, if it means, in the hyperbole of Eastern language, that the providence of God lengthened out the day far into the night and that the brightness of an early moon fulfilled the splendour of a clear evening, there is no more to be said, except that the word 'miracle' has here no definite meaning. But if it means the overthrow of the general laws by which God acts; if it means the destruction of universal order, and the breaking up of the interwoven cycles of the whole planetary system; if it means a rupture in the cosmical continuity, whose after effects on heat and cold, day and night, summer and winter, the life of all living things, would not cease with the ceasing of the day, but would cause an immediate and disastrous effect which would continue through the ages, and a memorial of which would have been preserved in the writings of the time and in all later traditions; then I say that the man who believes in this miracle must have either a very weak faith in God or a very lively and superstitious imagination.¹

¹ It may be said, You are slaying the slain. No one now believes that the sun and moon were really stayed in their course. You do not make sufficient allowance for the tropes and licence of poetry, nor appear to remember that the words quoted were a traditional war cry of Joshua. To this my sole answer would be to ask the question: Why does no one now believe that the course of the sun and the moon were arrested? Is it because no one now believes in miracles, or because some particular difficulty is felt in this special miracle? And

In this chapter we have come to the following conclusions:—We have learnt that in the material world there is a sequence in the past on which we habitually calculate, as continuing in the present and to continue in the future. To this sequence—implying (at least originally) a Lawgiver—we give the name of Law—law so exact and permanent that we can formulate it in precise scientific terms, not hereafter to be modified or enlarged or restricted. This sense of the prevalence of law and order enables us to shape our conduct, and to predict the unseen future, with the further result that we derive from it the notion of certainty. We believe that many results of scientific research are as certain as anything can be. We feel that truth may be within our grasp, and that it is possible to say ‘I know.’

if some particular difficulty is here felt, is it not because some particular difficulty is now experienced in conceiving a forcible violation of the universal order of the starry heavens, or an abrupt change where un-deviating law (doubtless of a Lawgiver) appears to reign supreme?

These latter remarks are not a digression. I wish to point out that if it is true that those who find no difficulty in believing that Christ walked on the sea (literally), or that Elisha raised a dead child to life (literally), are yet compelled to reject the story of the staying of the course of the sun and moon as a miraculous narrative, the reason is, that in the exact and physical sciences we arrive at the closest possible approximation to certainty, and feel in its strongest form the absolute and unalterable nature of law.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARTS.

ALL art is science. But art is something more than science. In science pure and simple we consider only the learning or the knowledge. There must be something learnt or something known. But in art there must be something *done*, some definite result to point to, some creation of the brain or hand, some fashioning of material or immaterial substance, so as to produce a new substance, or at least, a new modification of substance. If the art is devoted to useful purposes we may call it (as in the previous chapter), mechanical art ; if it is devoted to æsthetic purposes, we call it 'high art,' or 'The Arts.' Thus building is a mechanical art ; architecture is a high art. Dancing is an art, first of all because it is a science. It requires training. It has to be learnt. Next, dancing is an art because there is something to be accomplished. Lastly, dancing gives pleasure, and is intended to give pleasure ; it is an æsthetic art. Inarticulate speech is nature, not art. It has not to be learnt. But articulate speech is art, for it has to be learnt, and its aim is utilitarian.

The poet is born—not made, says the proverb, he is the product of nature, not of art. That is true. But it is only true in the same way as it is true that the real savant, the real philosopher, is born, not made. It does not vitiate the conclusion that poetry (*ποίησις*, or making) is high art. The poet is the maker, poetry is the thing made ; it is the art of the poet.

Of all the meanings of which the word *art* is capable, in this chapter we consider only one. We are concerned only with The Arts—that is, with art employed as a vehicle for giving pleasure or æsthetic gratification.

In this sense art appeals to us through our ‘five senses,’ and deals especially with beauty of colour or outline, harmony, rhythm, melody and proportion. The principal arts are painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, oratory. There are other arts of a lower order ; but not therefore to be despised, as cookery, appealing to the taste ; perfumery, appealing to the smell ; dressing, or the external architecture of the body ; dancing, or the visible music and rhetoric of the limbs. The question to be asked, and, if possible, to be decided is, Are there any certain laws of taste, pleasure, elegance, &c. ? Can we gauge grace and beauty, and say, ‘This is absolutely beautiful? this is certainly ugly?’

Now, so far as arts are sciences and nothing more, they will fall under the same treatment that has

already been extended to the sciences proper. So far as they are somewhat more than sciences, or, at least, so far as they have at present refused to reveal themselves as in perfect obedience to direct scientific laws, so far they will require somewhat different treatment. First, let us consider them simply as sciences, allying themselves without a break to the elder and rigid mathematical and physical branches of learning.

Our best test of certainty we pronounced to be *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*. We agreed that it was not a perfect test, and we rather maimed it by showing that *quod semper* could only apply to times present and past, because we could predicate nothing certain of the opinions and beliefs of the future. Still, in accordance with this test, as the most trustworthy one, we established certain general axioms and certain mathematical and physical axioms, and on the basis of *utmost possible certainty*, we handed over the mathematical and physical sciences to the proper experts, with the *greatest possible sense of certainty* that every conclusion arrived at by them was absolutely true and incontrovertible. So far, then, as the arts can be recognised as sciences pure and simple, so far we can establish canons of art which will be to the same extent true and incontrovertible; nor to this extent can the painter or musician, as painter or musician, deny the dictum of the mathematician. We will consider this in one or

two familiar instances, and then examine more complex cases.

An engineer, on looking at the picture of a house, a castle, or a church, might say, 'If this picture is supposed faithfully to represent the facts of the case, or the conception of the composer, such and such a wooden beam, or such and such an iron support is not strong enough for the work it has to do, and the whole building, if not now collapsing, is sure to come down in a very short time.' So far such a picture would be a bad picture, and ought to be a displeasing picture, and no amount of consent among artists could alter the fact that to this extent it was an unsatisfactory picture.¹

We have already explained that the principles of perspective are a matter of exact mathematical calculation and logical demonstration. Supposing that *A.*, looking out of a window at a certain prospect, were to say, 'That prospect makes a beautiful picture.' Supposing that *B.*, overhearing him, were by magic art to reproduce on canvas an exact copy of the prospect as it may be supposed to have been stamped on the window. In other words, suppose *B.* to know exactly all the laws of perspective, and to be endowed with the power of imitating exactly the optical effect. He puts his canvas before *A.* It will be impossible for *A.* to say, 'That is not a beautiful picture.' It

¹ A ruined castle is not, strictly speaking, a castle. It *was* a castle. It *is* a ruin. It must be judged as a ruin, not as a castle.

will be impossible for him to object, 'There wants a patch of red colour in that corner,' or 'That hill is not sufficiently foreshortened,' or to talk of want of balance, or contrast, or proportion, or what not. He may deny that the picture is a great picture; nor can he be contradicted, until he has clearly defined what is implied by a great picture. And indeed a great picture may well be dependent on laws more important than mathematical accuracy of colour and outline, and may hold itself but loosely bound by them. But whether this be so or not is nothing to our contention; which is, that it will be impossible for *A.* to say of *B.*'s picture, that it is not a beautiful picture, and, as far as it goes, a satisfactory picture, even if he adds, that he prefers many pictures which, as regards drawing and colour, are full of glaring defects, from which this picture is free.

Do not let there be room for any mistake. We have not denied that a picture painted and drawn in violation of the laws of perspective may be a good picture. Charles Lamb speaks charmingly and kindly of his blue china cup; and Japanese art, with its conventional laws and abrupt disregard of perspective that puts Hogarth's famous grotesque to the blush, has its genuine admirers among those fully entitled to judge, and whose admiration would seem to authorise our own. But still it must be confessed that Japanese fans, trays, and drawings, *quâ* perspective, are an abomination, and that if right pleasure is derived

from the false perspective it must be derived in spite of the falseness. For instance, the false perspective is frequently very unexpected and humorous. Or there may be an indefinable and irresistible charm arising from gracefulness of outline, or beauty or harmony of colour. Or again, as true intellectual pleasure is derived from accuracy and fidelity to fact, so true moral pleasure is derived from watching with sympathy and kindness the rough beginnings and eager strugglings within the confining swaddling clothes of an early and vigorous art. The falseness of the perspective may be hideous, but the untutored strivings after true representation may be beautiful, whereas they may be sacrificed altogether in the dull uniformity of correctness. Who would not prefer the rough stage of Shakespeare with Shakespeare on it, to the gorgeous representations of more modern times, with 'real water' and 'real elephants,' but with the meagre conceptions of a fifth-rate heart and brain? So also, in this matter of perspective, it may be that a sculptor designing his work to be seen from a great distance and in an unusual position (*e.g.* a statue on the top of a high column) may make allowance for excessive foreshortening, and attempt a compromise which is justified by the result, though not an exact solution of the mathematical problem.

As one more simple instance of the absolute dictation of pure science to art, let us suppose a man to say, 'I object to the sequence of notes in the scale

of C major. I prefer the sound of E flat to E after D.' To this the answer would be certain and incontrovertible. 'Sir, there is no room for such preference. E flat interferes with the harmonic progression of the lengths of strings which produce the notes of the common scale. The sequence you propose is unmusical and anomalous. You must get over your liking for E flat on pain of abjuring the rights of humanity which you enjoy in common with your fellows.'

In order to illustrate this close connection between science and art in more interesting and complex instances, I fear I must trouble the reader with a little arithmetic, exhibited under the unpalatable garb of algebra. I will, however, promise to be as brief as possible, and to restrict myself as far as possible to popular language.

I write down the following algebraical proposition :

3 times x added to 4 times y is equal to 7.

This is usually read,

3 x plus 4 y equals 7,

and is written,

$$3x + 4y = 7,$$

and is called an *equation* (properly an *equation of condition*) between the two *variables*, x and y .

Now it is manifest that any number of pairs of values can be given to x and y , to make the one side ($3x + 4y$) equal to the other side (7). Thus x may

equal 1 and y , 1. Or x may equal 2 and y , $\frac{1}{4}$. Or x may equal $\frac{1}{3}$ and y , 0; and so on. These pairs of values of x and y are said to *satisfy* the equation. And as there will manifestly be any number of pairs of these *varying* values, we see why x and y are called the *variables*.

If x and y represented a number of feet (or inches) the equation would be,

$$3x + 4y = 7 \text{ feet (or inches),}$$

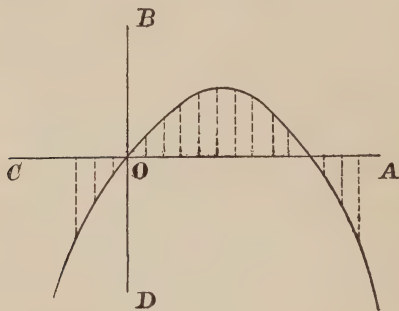
and any number of pairs of lines of different lengths might be given which would satisfy the equation.

Now, by a geometrical convention, each pair of values of x and y may be made to represent a point on a plane surface, so that all the pairs of values of x and y will represent a line or (as it is called in mathematics), a *curve*, on that surface. The curve may be considered to be a geometrical or graphical representation of the equation, and technically we are said to *trace the curve corresponding to the equation*.

The method of graphical or geometrical representation may be briefly explained as follows :

We draw two straight lines of indefinite length, at right angles to each other, as $C O A$, $B O D$. We give x in the equation the values, 0, 1, 2, 3, and so on in order, and, by arithmetic, find the corresponding values of y . So we give x the *negative* values, -1 , -2 , -3 , and so on in order, and find the corresponding values of y . We represent the positive values of

x by portions of $O A$, measured from O , and the negative values of x , by portions of $O C$, measured from O . The different values of y we represent by lines drawn, perpendicularly to $C O A$, from the different extremities of the lines representing the corre-



sponding values of x . If y is positive, we draw the perpendicular above, if negative, below, $C O A$. Then we join the tops of these perpendiculars by a continuous line, which is said to be the curve corresponding to the equation.

For instance, take the equation, $10y = 10x - x^2$.

Here, by arithmetic, we get the following pairs of values for x and y :

$$x=0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,$$

$$12, 13 \dots$$

$$y=0, \frac{9}{10}, \frac{16}{10}, \frac{21}{10}, \frac{24}{10}, \frac{25}{10}, \frac{24}{10}, \frac{21}{10}, \frac{16}{10}, \frac{9}{10}, 0, -\frac{11}{10},$$

$$-\frac{24}{10}, -\frac{39}{10} \dots$$

And again :

$$\text{let } x = -1, -2, -3 \dots$$

$$\text{then } y = -\frac{11}{10}, -\frac{24}{10}, -\frac{39}{10} \dots$$

The dotted perpendiculars in the figure represent the different values of y , as above, given in order ; and the curve joining the tops of the perpendiculars in a continuous line is the curve corresponding to the equation.

If an equation is written down at random, the corresponding curve will generally be ugly and possess no great interest. But if certain conditions are observed in writing down the equation, the result will frequently be a curve of very great beauty—shell forms, spirals, whorls, cusps, the pretty conventional heart, and many delicate and intricate geometrical patterns.

On the other hand, we may trace a curve on paper, and explain how it has been traced (*i.e.*, we may indicate the laws of its formation), and thereby find the 'equation to the curve'—at least, if the problem is not of too difficult a character, as will frequently turn out to be the case.

Thus we can find the 'equation' to the curve made by a chain hanging freely suspended from its extremities.¹

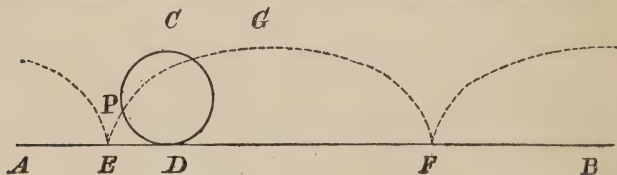
¹ This curve is called the catenary. By suspending a watch-chain from the hands, it will be observed that the catenary has many different

Or again, we can find the equation to the curve made by a nail driven into the tire of a cart-wheel running along a level straight road.¹

In a similar manner, if we were aware of the law of cyclonic storms, of the formation of an elm leaf, or of the even more irregular oak leaf, or of symmetrical waltzing round a symmetrical room, we could in each case write down the corresponding equation. Nor would it be theoretically difficult to conceive an extension of the problem; to take a phrase of music, to reduce it to a mathematical expression, and to trace the corresponding curve.

forms, changing from a vertical straight line, through all sorts of loops, to a line practically (though not mathematically) straight in a horizontal or slanting direction.

¹ This curve is called the cycloid, and in many ways possesses a very interesting history. Let AB be the level straight road, CPD



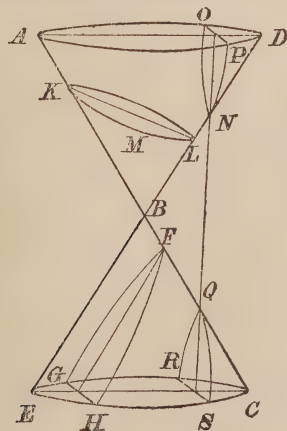
the cart-wheel, P the nail in it. Then, as CPD runs along the road from A to B , P will trace out the curve shown in the figure by a dotted line. E and F are called the cusps. G is the highest point.

Now if EGF be inverted so as to form a sort of saucer with G for its lowest point, the curve has this curious property—that small balls set free to run down the inner edge of the curve from any points in it will all reach the bottom G in exactly the same length of time. It was this property of the inverted cycloid that set Huyghens thinking of using it to mark time accurately. The final results he attained do not differ in general principles from those which now regulate the action of clocks and watches.

We will now give a striking instance to illustrate the foregoing, with the object of showing the close correspondence between *the results of pure geometry, the graphic representation of algebraical equations, the curves of nature, and the laws of physics.*

Among the many problems ancient geometers set themselves to solve, one was to find the nature and properties of the curves formed by cutting a cone by a plane. A double cone may be represented roughly by two sugar-loaves, one over the other, with their vertices coincident. If the cutting plane is parallel to an external line of the cone through the vertex, the curve is called a *parabola*; if the plane cuts the cone from side to side, the curve is called an *ellipse*; if the plane cuts the cone where it spreads out below, and also where it spreads out above, the curve is called a *hyperbola*.¹

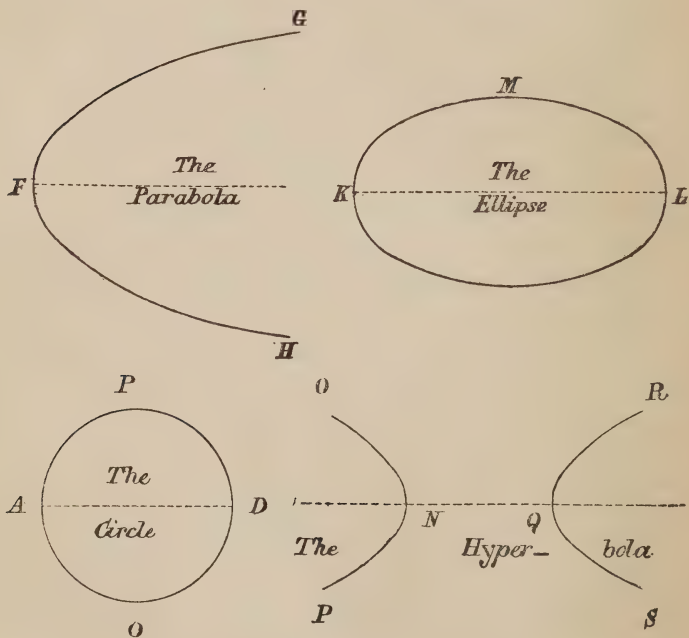
¹ In the figure the two sugar-loaves ABD , EBC , make the



It is evident from this description that a parabola is a curve of one branch, stretching in two directions into

double cone. B is the vertex. GFH is a parabola, the cutting plane being parallel to the external line DBE of the cone. KML is an ellipse, the plane cutting one section of the double cone completely through. The two curves (called *branches*) ONP , RQS , make up the hyperbola, the plane cutting both sections of the double cone.

Below we show diagrams of the same curves in full relief.



It is clear that APD in the cone will be a circle, and therefore that a circle is only a 'variety' of the ellipse. It is clear, also, that by making the cutting plane pass through B without cutting the cone again, there will be no curve, the only section being the point B . Thus we include a

infinity; that an ellipse (or circle) is a closed curve; that a hyperbola is a curve of two branches, separated from one another and each stretching in two directions into infinity. From the way in which these curves have been discovered they are called *the Conic Sections*, and their nature and properties have been fully worked out. It is evident to the eye that though they have a close family relationship, they have not what may be called a family resemblance. So much out of a chapter of ancient geometry.

We take a leap of more than a thousand years from the time that the Conic Sections were first discovered, and we arrive at a period in the history of mathematics when certain algebraists, on setting themselves the problem to trace the curve corresponding to an equation which is technically called *the general equation of the second degree*, found that this equation represented the parabola, the ellipse, the hyperbola, and the varieties of these three curves, and no other curves. It was clear therefore that these curves, as they belonged to the same cone family, so also belonged to the same algebraical family, though to the eye there was no apparent resemblance. So much for the algebraists.

point and a *circle* under the general notion of an ellipse. Again, it is clear that if the cutting plane $G F H$, parallel to the line $D B E$, be moved parallel to itself towards $D B E$, it will at length coincide with the line $D B E$, which is therefore called one of the 'varieties' of the parabola. There is also a 'variety' of the hyperbola, which, as it will not again come under our notice in the text, we will not here particularise.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Kepler discovered that Mars' orbit round the sun is an ellipse. It was also discovered that a stone thrown from the hand moves in a parabola,¹ and that the orbit of a comet is a parabola.² So much for certain facts of nature, unexplained and unconnected with one another.

More than half a century afterwards Newton laid down the universal law of Gravitation. He found that under the *hypothetical* influence of this law a planet must move in an ellipse, a parabola, or a hyperbola; and that under the *actual* influence of this law, having due regard to all the circumstances, a stone must move in a parabola, a comet in a parabola, and a planet in an ellipse.³ So much for the universal law of nature.

Let us reconsider these things. What connection is there between the plane sections of a cone and the undisturbed motions of matter? What resemblance between an ellipse, a parabola, and a hyperbola? What connection between an algebraical

¹ Unless thrown vertically upwards, or *dropped* from the hand to the earth, in which case its motion is a straight line, a geometrical variety of the parabola.

² Strictly speaking, an extremely elongated ellipse. For when a heavenly body moves in an extremely elongated ellipse, the part of the orbit that can be ascertained by an inhabitant of this globe has the nature and properties of a parabola for the finite parts of the curve near the vertex. I conceive that an inhabitant of Neptune, or, at least, of a still more distant planet or star, would describe the motion of a comet, as it came within his ken, as that of an ellipse or even of a straight line. So, also, it is not really true that a stone thrown from the hand *in vacuo* moves in a parabola. It really moves in an extremely elongated ellipse, whose focus is, approximately, the centre of gravity of the earth.

³ The exceptional cases of a body moving in a circle or a straight line correspond with the 'varieties, of the Conic Sections.

equation of a particular form and the law of gravitation? Who but a madman would ever have ventured to bind these incongruities in the meshes of a close and subtle relationship? The algebraist did not expect his equation would disclose the three dissimilar conic sections. Kepler having found his planet moving in an ellipse, did not anticipate that other undisturbed motions would be parabolas.

There would seem to be one flaw in the strictness of the parallels pointed out and the close relationships ascertained; but it disappears on examination, or, rather, it supplies a singular and unexpected support. The three curves, the ellipse, the parabola, and the hyperbola are all conic sections. They are also all curves of one algebraical family. But only the first two are to be found in nature, as paths of heavenly bodies. It would seem as if the absence of a hyperbolic orbit pointed to an irremediable discrepancy. This, however, is not the case. Newton's universal law of gravitation, if a law of *repulsion* instead of a law of *attraction*, would give hyperbolic motions in the heavens, instead of elliptic and parabolic motions. And we have already shown that the varieties of the conic sections are the same as the varieties of the algebraical family, and that all of them express varieties in the motions of bodies.¹ So that the corroboration is complete.

¹ The variety *a point* (See Note p. 65) corresponds to the variety *a body at rest*.

Here, then, are the stubborn facts. The rhythmical courses of the planets can be formulated as dull algebraical equations ; and the abstruse and idle speculations of old geometers, resulting in seemingly unmeaning curves, become instinct with secret life when the question of how Nature works her work is asked and solved.

In the above instance laws of number, of form, and of motion under given circumstances, are shown to be closely allied. Such instances may be multiplied and diversified, and extended to other spheres of knowledge. For instance, sound may be connected with number, and number with form ; or, conversely, sound with form, and form with number ; and similar connections can be made with colour, light, and heat. We will give a few examples.

The notes of the octave can be produced from strings whose lengths vary as the reciprocals of the natural numbers, that is, whose lengths are in the ratio of 1, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, &c. This we have observed before (see p. 58).

Let fine sand be dispersed lightly and evenly over a square plate of glass, held horizontally, and clamped at the centre. Let one or more points at the edge be touched with the fingers, and draw a violin bow across the edge of the plate at different properly selected points. The sand will begin to move in unison. It will collect itself in little heaps, and separate itself from itself by little valleys. It will finally assume a

form of rest, which will consist of symmetrical and very pretty patterns or curves. These curves are different, according to the points at which the fingers and the bow are applied. The experiment can be varied in many ways.

Let water be allowed to issue from a fine orifice in the bottom of a vessel. If a proper musical note be struck, the stream may be made to obey the dictate of the note, not only by singing in unison, but by changing the conditions of its natural flow, and separating itself into disconnected drops or series of drops, which follow a different law of symmetry to that regulating them before the note was struck. This experiment can also be varied in many ways.

A gas flame, properly controlled, can be made to elongate itself, to shorten itself, to extinguish itself, to jump with rhythmical beats, and to utter a note in unison with some special musical note, clearly sounded by a bow on a string of a violin.¹

Let us consider the scale of C major ; the notes of the chord being C, E, G, and C again. Let C be clearly and vigorously struck on the violin, with continuous action of the violin bow. Let the hearer think of the upper E. Having fixed the idea of this sound clearly in his mind, he will begin to hear

¹ The reader is referred to Tyndall on Sound for a full description of the above experiments ; wherein also he will find many other extremely interesting and beautiful experiments, bearing closely on the subject in the text.

it resound from the violin above the C : shortly it will overpower the C, till finally nothing is heard but the E, as long as the mind is kept *attentive*. The same experiment will succeed with the upper G, the upper C, or the lower C. Or two notes may be heard blended together.

Let the eye fix itself on a round spot (of an inch in diameter say) of pure blue on a white background for about twenty seconds, and then turn and fix its attention on a single point in a sheet of white paper. Almost immediately will be perceived a spot of the same shape (the size will depend upon the distance of the paper) of orange, sometimes painfully distinct and lasting. Similar experiments with other colours will produce similar results.

An explanation of the above experiment may be found in any book on Light and Colour. It may be observed, that blue and orange, to take the instance mentioned above, are 'complementary' colours, and the experiment supplies a proof, if any were needed, that these colours are complementary. The subject is interesting, in connection with the changes of colours produced in flowers by cultivation. The experiment of the blue spot on a white background may be varied thus. After looking attentively at it for about twenty seconds, a halo of orange will be seen to form itself round about the spot. In respect of the vividness and duration of the impression,

Sir Isaac Newton having fixed his gaze on the sun at noon day found, on withdrawing it, that he was quite blind to all objects, except a large gleaming blue sun, which remained persistent; he was confined to a darkened bed-chamber for weeks, without being able to lose the impression; and even in later years, when quite recovered, on thinking over his rash experiment, the old image of a large blue sun would rise unbidden before his eyes.

In musical glasses the finger moistened with water is passed over the rim of the glass. The vibration of the glass thus established, causes the musical sound, and the vibration communicates itself to the water in the glass, causing a delicate play of ripples on the surface of the water, principally round the edge. The glasses being the same, the musical note depends on the amount of water in the glass, and each musical note produces a correspondent ripple on the water. Thus a musical note might be described graphically by a geometrical curve, and this curve could be denoted (see pp.59-61) by an algebraical expression; or the scale of ascending notes might be signified by a curve representing the different heights of water in similar glasses emitting given sounds.

Liquid substances, on becoming solid, do not throw themselves into shapeless or homogeneous masses. A law of formation regulates the position of each molecule in the mass, the formation depending on the nature of the substance, and on the circumstances

under which solidification takes place, the result being compact masses of separate crystals of definite character, more or less distinguishable. A simple and beautiful instance is to be found in the forms of water solidifying into ice, snow, or hoar frost. The crystals of snow are singularly delicate, beautiful, and varied; the spikelets of early ice, and the flowery, fern-like, and leaf-like clusterings of hoar-frost are not less graceful, and can be examined with greater ease.

The object of adducing these various facts of nature is twofold: first, they, and others like them, prove the intercommunion and coherence of many things originally appearing disconnected. *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. Their sound is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.* The interdependence is unbroken and unbreakable, though often (indeed *generally*) not recognised. Next, they prove that, at least in simple cases, liking and disliking, taste and fashion, are the outcome of eternal laws, of laws of order, or *Kosmos*; and not of chance or individual caprice. No man or set of men has a right to pronounce an authoritative dictum that this is beautiful and that that is ugly, this pleasant to hear and that disagreeable, without consulting these eternal laws; nor can such things be finally determined by any musical or artistic clique. Indeed, it would be conceivable that an algebraist, without an 'ear for music,' (deaf, if

you like)¹ should pronounce absolutely of one of Beethoven's Sonatas that it was *good* music or *bad* music, settling the matter beyond the possibility of reasonable dispute or contradiction.

But the objection may be raised, that all this is true to a certain extent, but does not touch the inner soul of art. 'As there is an aroma of meat and a bouquet of wine which defy chemical analysis, but which are no less a part of meat and wine, and without which meat is tasteless and wine worthless, so,' it may be urged, 'a picture might be painted with perfect perspective, and a tune composed according to strictest rule, of which the one would be dull and the other spiritless; in other words, there is a bouquet and aroma of sound and colour that is of the very essence of art, and which cannot be gauged by the clumsy instruments of mathematical treatment and mechanical measurement. Moreover, mention has here been made only of beauty of geometrical form, and accuracy of drawing, and fidelity to fact, and one or two of the simplest laws of colour, and correctness of musical scales; whereas art concerns itself with nobler and higher matters. The poet is a maker or a creator; the artist is a composer or a putter together, so as to render a spiritual conception, a fantasy, or a delicate play of imagination, vivid to the eye or ear;

¹ 'A deaf man might have *seen* the harmony,' writes Professor Leconte, describing the action of musical sounds on gas-flames from ordinary burners, at a concert at which he was present.

and no examination has been instituted into the main feature of art, whether of the poet, painter, or musician, which is—composition.’

To such objections the following answers may be returned. First, though it may be readily granted that accuracy and fidelity to material fact is not the final aim of high art, yet the best art is not only not possible without such accuracy, but such accuracy underlies all art, as the processes of the bones and the prominences of the muscles underlie the contour of the rounded arm, the facile wrist, and the active fingers. For what reason do painters fall into such ecstasies over an interior of Teniers or musicians over a fugue of Sebastian Bach, if it be not for the loving and tender fidelity to truth and fact in their most familiar aspects in the one case and for the perfect knowledge of the grammar of music in its most extensive variety in the other, so that in each case students of art put themselves reverently to school in the presence of these great masters of art? Yet it may still be that these great masters do but stand at the threshold of the temple of art within which the immortal workers¹ of deepest spiritual conception sit on awful thrones, holding in their hands the mystic lamps of God.

Next, it should be observed that though it may be true that the aroma of meat cannot be analysed

¹ *E.g.*, Moses, Æschylus, Shakespeare, Beethoven.

by the chemist's tests or weighed in the chemist's balance, the chemist would probably tell you that was no proof that such analysis and measurement was impossible or beyond his sphere. He would say he was biding his time. We have already observed that men who can predict an eclipse a thousand years hence, cannot predict the weather of this day week, but that it does not therefore follow that the prediction of weather is outside the realms of science. All that can be said is, that we are not aware of all the data, that we have not sufficient command over the multiplex difficulties of the problem, and the complex interaction of competing circumstances, but, *in posse*, the prediction of the weather is easily conceivable. So of matters of art. The fundamental canons of art can be laid down in strict accord with the rigid laws of science, so that a false taste of fashion can be corrected and chastened, and an ignorant and foolish pleasure, or approval, can be guided and modified. And if we cannot link the grander sphere of high art, of spirituality, of imagination, of composition, so indissolubly with the edicts of science, it does not follow that the links are not there, only that we do not yet perceive them, or know where to cast about to discover them.¹ They are

¹ In Bulwer Lytton's 'Coming Race,' art generally, and poetry in particular, are relegated to women and children. Sober men find neither time nor inclination for pursuits which seem to them so little serious. There are halls of painting and libraries of poetic literature of

being discovered. It may be a long step from such enquiries to write down a sonata of Beethoven as an algebraical expression, and deduce the curve. But the difficulty is a difficulty of complexity, not of incongruity, or inapplicability, or incompatibility.

And indeed there are signs sufficiently apparent that we may speedily effect much in this direction.¹

Scientific knowledge made a considerable start two hundred years ago ; and in the last hundred, still more the last fifty or twenty years, it has made an enormous advance.² Two reasons can be given for this. First, we now commence on the safe foundation of experiment and observation, and proceed on the fruitful method of inductive reasoning, and next (*vires*,

earlier times, but these are more for the benefit of the antiquarian and historian than of the artistic student or enthusiastic worshipper. And indeed even the passion of love has changed its character, and been delegated, at least in its outward and visible signs, to the gentler sex. If love is as deep, it is less spasmodic, and, as a passion, less lasting. Science has taken the place of art, peace of war, affection of passionate love, and a deep calm religious trust and assurance, of ecstasy, enthusiasm, and 'revival' movements.

¹ A careful and interesting summary of the present state of our knowledge with regard to matters here discussed, with many thoughtful suggestions as to the bases of æsthetic pleasure, will be found in a lecture of Professor Barrett, on the Analogy between Light and Sound, delivered at the South Kensington Museum, in 1876.

² Consider the discoveries of the last two or three years. The microphone, the telephone, the phonograph, the taximeter, the radiometer, the behaviour of 'ultra-gaseous' matter, the liquefaction of oxygen, hydrogen, and common air, the subdivision of the electric beam, the spectroscopic identity (as it would appear) of the chemical elements, and many others.

acquirat eundo), each new fact, each fresh discovery, combines with all the old facts and discoveries, so that the rate of progress becomes increasingly accelerated. Each science helps some kindred science ; the missing link in one is supplied by successful experiments in another. Now this rapid progress of science will be advantageous to art. It will help to make a correct judgment in questions of art possible, and to reduce the present chaos of mere opinion to a minimum. The help will be of a twofold nature. The *methods* of scientific investigation will indicate to us the right methods to pursue in establishing true canons of art, and the *results* of scientific investigation will enable us both to form a good judgment, and to correct a false or hasty judgment in matters of art.

But when all is said that can be said, it will still remain a moot point how far the arts are merely luxuriant branches of the banana tree of science, and how far they possess a free vitality of their own, having a root in themselves and obeying the laws of an independent existence. So far as they are sciences, no doubt they are built on the firm foundation of the scientific axioms which themselves were proved and tested in accordance with the test *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*. So far as the arts are higher than the sciences ; so far as the disturbing elements of life, emotion, selection, come in ; so far as the arts are differentiated from the pure sciences—what are the canons of art ; on what principles shall we approve

and condemn ; to what extent is our test a true test ? Shall all men have a voice and a decision, or shall the cultured classes bid us accept this and reject that, as having sole authority to judge ?

But now observe at once, at starting. Though the pure sciences have been securely founded on certain general and special axioms, which have received the acceptance of all men (so much so that their justification is this very *consensus hominum*), yet the world, having once agreed to these same axioms, relegates the sciences themselves to the learned classes. Scientific men consider themselves, and are considered by others, to alone have the right to expound the truths and to lay down the laws of scientific matters. But if the cultivated classes were to attempt to appropriate to themselves the same authority over the arts, or theologians over religion, the attempt would at once be recognised as a failure. All men have a right, or hold they have a right, to express an opinion, and to have a belief as soon as sentiment, imagination, emotion step in. And it is certain that many, to whom Beethoven is as a sealed book, listen with unfeigned pleasure and delight to the negro minstrels of our music-halls. Hence the explanation of the *strange* fact that there should be *such difference 'twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee*.

If, then, all men are to be allowed some right to express an opinion of what is good and bad art, it will follow that canons of art must be laid down on the

broad basis of 'common sense;' that is, that our test, *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*, retains its pristine force.

This does not imply that an enormous preponderance will not (or, at least, may not) be allowed to the cultured classes, and to artists. A man who has himself painted is so far a better judge of pictures. It is one element towards a correct judgment of architecture, that a man should have some practical knowledge of the bearing strength of bricks and arches. A good judgment is to a great extent the offspring of the leisure of a life, free from the cares and burdens of money making and daily labour; of a life that is well read, and that has had much opportunity for quiet and careful thought and criticism. But still much fantastical opinion and biassed judgment of the professed critic or expert must at times be corrected from below; and, in addition to the knowledge and trained observation of the learned, and the practical experience of the art-worker, we need the balancing common sense of the many.

Now we may take Ruskin, considered as a professed critic of drawing, painting, sculpture, and architecture, as a most excellent example of the right method of approaching art. In him, in connection with art, there is a marriage of enlightened common sense and cultivated criticism. He knows what he means, and he knows how to say it. And thus it is that he has told us, as no man before, what to paint

and feel, how to paint and feel, how and why to like and dislike, how to enter into sympathy with the mind and heart of the painter.

In one of Ruskin's most elementary works, 'Three Letters on Drawing,' he lays down and illustrates the laws that should guide an artist in composition, and asserts (rightly, as it would seem) that no noble work can be done in which these laws are not observed; not necessarily designedly, nor with set purpose, but *at best* involuntarily and naturally, like the regular efforts of breathing or walking. Such laws are the laws of *principality* and *subordination*. The main interest of the picture should centre in one object or group, the other parts of the picture not distracting attention to themselves, but leading up to the principal and prominent features of the picture, and conducing to the general effect. In other words, the picture as a whole, and in its several parts, should tell one tale. Hogarth supplies good instances of obedience to this law of unity in all his pictures, not excluding 'The March to Finchley.' He selects the most difficult groupings, and eludes the difficulties or triumphs over them in the most wonderful manner. No one can hesitate to say which is the principal figure or group of figures, and yet, amid the immense profusion of detail in the smallest particulars, each patch of colour and each line of drawing, in due order, and without jostling or offence, point the same moral and work to one end. The still life, the accidental accompaniments,

the pictures on the walls, the side scenes, demand the most careful attention, and aid the full effect and operation of the picture, but all *in due order and subordination*. On the other hand, the violation of these rules in a great work by a living master, has been justly held to produce a disagreeable impression, and to temper the admiration elicited by the conscientious attention of the artist to the minutest details, and by his earnest resolve to produce a living and true ideal. In this picture, the realistic and too prominent wood shavings, scattered on floor and bench (not to particularise other details), unwillingly and imperatively draw the eye from the central figures of the Carpenter and his Mother.

Other elementary laws of composition that Ruskin insists on may be mentioned here without dwelling on them. There are the laws of *repetition*, and *symmetry*, and *curvature*, and *gradation*; and, in contradistinction to them, there is the all-important law of *contrast*. To these may be added the law of *fidelity*. An ideal Welsh peasant girl must not have neat hair, or a clean face, however engaging or pretty, or even graceful. A dung-heap in a stack-yard must not look as neat and tidy as an old dame's best room, or as picturesque as a shady nook or a water-mill. If a dung-heap must be painted, let it be relegated to the dim back-ground, or to some unnoticeable corner; so also 'atmospheric effect' and misty outlines are not always

necessary or even desirable. The truth of the story must not be sacrificed to the artistic inspiration.

Similar laws will be found to regulate all the other realms of art—music, poetry and oratory, sculpture and architecture. The principles, for æsthetic purposes, are at once felt to be as elementary as the axioms of arithmetic and geometry are acknowledged to be in pure mathematics. Nor can much more argument be of avail in the one case than in the other. If any man denies these laws of art, he must attempt to adduce others which more generally command, or have commanded, the assent of mankind. I would like to sum up, however, with one or two general remarks.

The music of some composers, however great, seems to be a simple inspired outpouring of melody without expressing a definite idea. The music of others, on the contrary, seems to be an almost offensive imitation of natural sights, sounds, motions and emotions. There would seem to be a happy mean between these which some composers have observed. I would adduce, as an instance of the first class, Sebastian Bach's gavottes and sarabands, and fugues. Of the second class, portions of Haydn's oratorios and operas ; and Handel occasionally, when he is playful in an elephantine way. Of the third, Beethoven and Mendelssohn are in the very first rank. Without venturing to make any further comparisons, I only desire to add that soulless music (even if composed according to

the correctest rules of grammar, so as to be an example to all musicians), however charming, or however delicately calculated to tickle the jaded ear of the critic with quaint terms, or with a studied simplicity that is the crowning effort of a high art, can never be classed in the highest class as regards the *aim* of the composer. Handel may express himself sometimes too roughly or coarsely (as belonging to a strong rugged nature), and Haydn too openly and directly, but the *aim* to express a deeply felt sentiment, to impress a character of a defined nature on a piece, to clothe an idea in music, to be human and sympathetic, even to turn self-sorrow into melody, seems to me the highest and only aim really worth striving after. This aim is admirably carried out in the 'Lieder ohne Worte.' In all these 'songs' we believe Mendelssohn had an interpretation; many of them, indeed, we can interpret. Some of them are hunting songs, some funeral elegies. Some express the deep heart of a summer noon; some the evening song of the gondolier amid the plashings of quiet waters, and the sound of distant merriment. Some are wails:—'Why art thou so cast down, oh my soul?' and there an end. Others complete the thought, 'Oh trust in God, for I will yet thank Him, which is the help of my countenance and my God.' In some we are in the village street or on the village green, with the children playing together and the elders chatting at their cottage doors. One is called

‘The Two Voices.’ But in many others, not so called, we detect the two voices—the reconciliation of young married couples after their first differences; the tender deep expostulating bass of the one, the tender explanatory and consoling treble of the other; both plaintive; neither fully cured of a delicious pain of forgiving and being forgiven.

There is this advantage in songs without words, that, as the music alters in tone and feeling, we are able, and indeed bound (if, in a reverent and student-like frame, we are ready to admit that they are really songs worthy to be interpreted), to alter the strain of our intellectual and spiritual emotions, so as to keep ourselves in harmony with the changing emotions of the composer. Also good music is hardly like the exhortation in the Corinthian church delivered in an unknown tongue, where there was nobody to interpret. Everyone hath an interpretation. Everyone hears the music appeal to him as if it were a friendly voice in the language in which he was born. There is a corresponding disadvantage felt in songs *with* words that whereas the *air* remains the same, the *verses* alter and carry on the idea or the action. This frequently offends the judgment with the sense of the incongruous. A recurring burden or chorus to the different verses of the song will often reconcile us to the recurring melody; and the requisite sense of unity in diversity is sustained. But there is a better way of overcoming the difficulty: by keeping the same air

to each verse, while altering the setting to suit the sense. Hatton manages this exceedingly well, in his rendering of Herrick's 'Letanie of the Holy Spirit.' Mendelssohn frequently adopts this expedient with very pleasing and subtle effect.

The point I wish to insist upon is that music, whether accompanied by the human voice or not, should have a thought, a unity, a soul—that it should be something more than sweet sound; that the accompaniment should not be merely a senseless vehicle for uttered sounds, but that the words and the music should ennoble and inspire and inform one another. The Italian opera set before an English audience has always seemed to me an anomaly, and a disgraceful prostitution by the composer of his best talents and noblest conceptions to the foolish behests of fashion.¹ 'Sir, I know my Bible,' is said to have been the indignant answer of Handel to a busybody who offered to adapt words to one of his oratorios. To compose noble music and to think noble thoughts were to his mind a single and indivisible action. The corresponding truth is well recognised in painting, and a vivid glow of vigorous colouring, to represent the interior of a

¹ A similar offence against good sense and reverent feeling is common in many chant books, arising from a total disregard of grammar, punctuation, and sense, to suit the musical cadence. To my mind both music and words suffer. For instance: Glory be to the Fa|ther, and to the | Son; is, to say the least, repugnant to culture and good taste; whereas the following arrangement is natural and not less musical: Glory be to the Father, | and to the | Son.

furnace, can only by concession be styled a picture or a design. And even as regards stained glass (about which so much mystic nonsense is talked), if the object aimed at be nothing more than to throw a dim religious light over the darkened recesses of some cathedral, or to produce a beautiful kaleidoscopic effect, it would surely seem that the object is poor and mean, unless the designs are purely geometrical. But figures introduced—life of men, and animals, and trees—should tell a story that all can read. Life must be life-like; if not life-like, life should not be represented—an artist's talents should not be employed to a false and foolish issue.¹ As this law of reality seems to me to lie more at the basis of true art than any other, I will illustrate with two more examples.

I do not know whether it is as common now as it was in my youth, to hear the hymn 'Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah,' sung to Zerlina's charming air in Don Giovanni. A good hymn, good music, and a correspondingly discordant effect. 'Batti, batti, bel Mazetto,' is a sprightly song; and, in fitting agreement, the tune is sprightly, coquettish, confiding, and plain-

¹ These remarks are not intended to apply to *old* stained glass. This is often excellent in the highest degree, even where scarlet-clad Elijahs, in impossible attitudes, are taking bread from enormous blue ravens of most unfamiliar aspect. Such stained windows have their special charm, for reasons which need not be given here. But it is as absurd for modern artists to imitate the quaint designs and mannerisms of the old workers with their different world of thought and conception, as it would be to fill the Royal Academy with imitations of Japanese art, or with Holy Families after Raphael.

tive ; but it is in no sense serious—still less religious.
Caveat plagiarius !

The old Italian musician Tartini wrote a violin piece, known by the *sobriquet* of 'The Devil's Tattoo.' The story he told was, that one day, while playing and composing music on his violin, in melancholy humour, the devil sat at the foot of his bed, grinning and spoiling all with a villanous accompaniment. Now it is not here a matter of interest whether Tartini's story is true, whether he believed it to be true, or whether it was a mere fiction of his. What *is* a matter of interest, is that here we have an insight into the mind and intention of the composer. It has been my fortune to hear this piece so played that all who heard it could not but confess that it is a charming and melodious composition ; but of the mind of the composer not a trace. An auditor who had heard nothing of the story would never have gathered a syllable of it from the execution. The result, as I have heard it played by another violinist, is not so melodious ; it is often harsh, and prominently vigorous and jerky ; but it observes the law of congruity and reality, and obeys the intention of the composer, and so far at least, in the most important particular, it is better played. One can hear the sad undertone of pain, and misery, and despair ; of shielding the heart by silence and submission, and thus vainly attempting to subdue the sting of the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched ; and

ever and anon, overspreading this melancholy undercurrent, one is forced to hear the cruel hideous mockery of the all-pervading fiend, breaking out into peals of bitter and triumphant merriment, and overbearing the deep voice of lamentation and woe.

If it be retorted that all this is too imaginative; that music and distinct emotional ideas cannot be so closely blended together, that the essence of music is not to satisfy the intellect or the heart, but the ear, the reply may fairly be made: first, that most of the great masters of musical composition are, and have been, of a different opinion. The harshness of Max Bruch's 'Schön Ellen,' the monotonous bass of Ferdinand Hiller's 'Auf der Wacht,' the abrupt discords in parts of Haydn's 'Seven Last Words' (especially in the third movement, 'Sitio,' though similar remarks may be made of the other movements), the musical spell in the oratorio of 'Joshua' to stay the course of the sun and moon, all tell a different tale, and one more consonant to reason. Secondly, that, as I have previously pointed out, there is a resemblance and affinity between cognate arts which all are knit into one Kosmos. Haydn's 'noble steed' gallops and his 'host of insects' buzz. Locke's blind man, who said that scarlet was like the sound of a trumpet, and the poet who said that the colour of a donkey's bray was brownish yellow, had got deep into the heart of things.

Throughout this chapter, the arts of oratory and

rhetoric have received no attention. It will be sufficient to indicate, with regard to them, the line of thought I should desire to adopt.

Thus, in poetry, I should begin by distinguishing between the framework of poetry—rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration (and perhaps we should add quaint turns of speech, poetic licence of grammar and words, reversion to earlier and antiquated phases of the language), and the poetic inspiration. The framework of poetry, as it is a most interesting subject, so also it is very important. But though there would be much to be said on this head, no insuperable difficulties would be met with. It would not be difficult to show that if the framework is good, it obeys definite scientific laws, and that neither the musical cadence, nor the strident clang and uproar are arbitrary productions proceeding from accidental or ill-defined causes. And thus poetry, regarded simply as melodious utterance, can be dissected with sufficient accuracy, and be pronounced good or bad according to circumstances. We can pronounce what it is we like, and show why we like it. We can classify and we can name. And of course it is clear that no poetry can be placed in the very first rank if it has not been thus fittingly framed.¹ But without the

¹ I knew a child who asked permission to learn the ‘Lady’s Song’ in *Comus*. ‘Why?’ with an amused laugh; ‘do you understand it?’ ‘Oh no, not at all, but it is so beautiful.’ The child, now a man, has told me that he pondered for many long years afterwards over the hidden and mysterious cause of the evident amusement resulting from

poetic inspiration, be the framework what it will, the poetry is dead ; not true poetry at all. And this poetic inspiration, embracing in its grasp the whole world of emotions, as well as the less complex world of sensuous enjoyment and delight, is as difficult to gauge as we found it to be the case in music, when we got beyond the grammar of music, or in painting, when we got beyond the laws of harmonious colour and graceful form. As then, so here, we can only point out landmarks.

It seems to me that what may be called dramatic painting stands at an immeasurable disadvantage as compared with poetry. In poetry one gets the full mind of the poet, as he is able to know it and express it.¹ What is unsatisfactory in noble music is, that when one has seized upon an interpretation, one longs to know whether that interpretation expresses the idea and emotion of the composer. But in dramatic painting there is the further irreparable loss

what appeared to him so natural and simple a request. No laughter would have been caused if he had asked for bread and butter, or a ripe plum. Why should it have arisen when he asked for sweet and sonorous sound?

¹ 'As he is able to know it and express it,' because many spiritual conceptions are too deep for words. I suppose there will always be more or less controversy what Shakespeare meant to express by the character of Hamlet, but it is at least probable that if asked what he meant to express, he could not have answered in clearer language than that he has deliberately chosen. If a man does not always know the springs of action with regard to himself, how shall he interpret the actions of another? 'When I was your age I could have given you an answer,' is reported to have been the reply of Goethe, on being asked to explain the meaning of a passage in 'Faust.'

that no complete idea is possible at all, for the conception of the present is impossible, unless linked with that of the past and the future. When strongly moved by a dramatic painting, who does not long for the figures to leap from the frame and act out the living reality? The woman in guilty despair crumpled at her husband's feet; the conscience-stricken king starting up in terror and amazement, anxious to utter, and anxious to repress the murderous secret; the infuriated soldier raising aloft the little one, who has not had time to cease from smiling, while the straining eyeballs of the mother and the parted lips tell the intense agony of horror. What response will the husband make? Will he lift his wife up, or will he curse her? Why has not young Hamlet, grim as death, forced out the black secret, and quenched the miserable life in blood? Why does not Herod's man of war dash the babe to the ground, and at least end *that* scene? In landscapes the same sense of incompleteness is not felt, or at least not to the same extent; but even here one longs to see the waving corn wave, the meditative cattle chew the cud, the summer clouds form and reform in the high heavens. Still, this state of rest is endurable. The same feeling exists in comparing architecture with sculpture. Architecture, when noble, is completely satisfactory, for it means rest and stability, and the meaning corresponds with the result. It may be compared with landscape painting. But sculpture is as dramatic painting. In no

spirit of foolish sentimentality or affectation, I would submit that it is difficult to feel at rest while looking at most sculpture. When will that mortal struggle of Laocoon and his sons with the unconquerable snakes be over? How long will that lithe *discobolus* poise his quoit? When will that gladiator receive his 'habet,' and rest his head on his mother earth in peace? Add to which the sightless eyes are a compromise with the stubborn facts of marble that is always painful. The Egyptian gods, and heroes, and kings—the mighty sculptured Rameses greater than life—with their eyes straight before them, calmly surveying the long future as in a book spread open, look as if they have lived even if they are dead, and as if the cycles of the years may bring events in their due order, and cause them to rise from their seats and fulfil their grim lives. But the graceful, vigorous, and immortal works of Rome, of Greece, and of Italy, seem never to have lived, and to be awaiting their Pygmalion to give light to their eyes, and breathe into them the breath of life.

So far we have considered the arts in connection with science and plain common sense. Regarding the arts simply as sciences, we have found them to be subject to definite law, so that we have been able to lay down laws of right feeling and right pleasure, and certify a correct judgment. Taking a higher standpoint, we have been able, with the help of our test, to indicate the course to be pursued in order to arrive

at true canons of art. We have not attempted to say what those canons of art should be. They will be found in books dealing expressly with various branches of art. Suffice it that such canons can be established with some approach to accuracy, so that condemnation and approval shall be meted out with reasonableness, and the arbitrary dictates of ephemeral or class caprice kept in check. But in the highest art realm of all we are on most uncertain ground. The history of music, painting, and poetry is full of painful interest. 'Immortal' reputations flare and die in a moment, or wane away through the slow centuries. The greatest and noblest names suffer their occultations and eclipses, and present as many phases as the moon. Explanations may be given, but the facts remain. Nor could we dare to say of any man, in this our search after certainty, that his reputation is established in the ages.

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One further question we would ask. Is it possible to take another step, and trace a connection between The Arts, or, rather, the glories of sound and sight, and Natural Religion? Can we say that God, the ubiquitous Director of the Universe, is a God of Beauty, and not also a God of Ugliness; of Harmony, and not also of Discord? Can we say of natural sights and sounds—they are natural, therefore they are beautiful?

Granting that a personal God created the world

and all in it just as we find it, a first superficial observation of the facts of nature would, I think, establish (as Butler and others have remarked) that on the whole God is not the God of overflowing happiness or moral guidance, hardly the God of order ; and, though certainly the God of utility and design, yet of utility and design marked by extravagant waste and lavish profusion ; but that he was above all things the God of beauty, grace, strength (sometimes made perfect in weakness and insignificance), agility, brilliance, procreative energy, vitality—that he was Deva, Balder.

But further, with a larger and somewhat more thoughtful insight into facts, it is apparent that many men, religious like Paley, or impetuously philosophical like Rousseau, would return a bold answer. 'Yes, all natural things are beautiful. The seeing eye and the hearing ear, and the sympathetic heart, responding to the throbs of the deep inner soul of nature, will be enabled to resolve discords into harmonies, ugly seeming into beauty. The microscope declares the beetle from which the child runs away with antipathy and horror to be beautiful in all its parts, internal and external. All evil is good in essence, all ugliness is beauty in disguise, and the disguise is owing to ignorance and prejudice, blind eyes and coloured spectacles.' But to all such reasoning, and to the facts on which it is founded, however the reasoning be worthy of respect, and the facts of

careful consideration, it will be sufficient to answer that many *smells* are undeniably disagreeable (except to a few duly qualified insects), *e.g.* of decaying meat, of a skunk, and of ants heated with anger, the last of which can produce vomiting and even death; that many *sounds* are undeniably distressing and horrifying, *e.g.* the 'laughing' of a hyena, hideous, as far as I know, to all hearing races, except perhaps hyenas, and the cry of the sloth; and that many *sights* are undeniably and even increasingly ugly with the help of the microscope, *e.g.* the sight of a louse and bug. Moreover, however beautiful a cockroach or a snake's head may be under the microscope, the spontaneous dislike of a child to the one, and the world's abhorrence of the other (so that a serpent has become to many nations the type of evil) can be easily justified.¹

¹ There is no doubt that the emotions and the faculty of association have much to do with our sensations of æsthetic pleasure and displeasure. A child thinks the homely face of his mother a picture of perfect beauty, not only because he loves his mother and his love invests the face of the mother with a beauty not its own—a beauty which is but the gracious offspring of his own warm nature—but above all because the love and tenderness of the mother beaming from her face is a spark lit from the glory of God Himself, and the child cannot fail to recognise the heavenly visitant. His soul basks and rejoices in the gentle and protective *expression* rather than in the features of the face. He grows older, and he sees young, fresh, perfect faces which set his heart afire, and the pulses of his being singing silent songs. He now acknowledges that his mother's face is homely, but he does not love it the less, for surely the Lord hath been there.

Or again, to take an incident from real life. A child is reading the tragic end of 'Kenilworth,' and struggling with his emotions as the impending clouds gather thick around Amy Robsart and hurry her to the terrible catastrophe. While he is reading, and, as it would seem,

If it be said that God is also a God of Utility, and that the smell of the skunk, the cry of the sloth, the glittering head of the snake, and the odious nature of the bug, are a protection to themselves or a means of offence or of warning with regard to their enemies, it is sufficient to answer that this is beside the point, which is, whether all natural things are beautiful. We are not demanding whether they are useful; whether, in other words, the heart or understanding approve, but whether the eye, ear, and nose receive a sensation of pleasure.

But there is another method of cutting the Gordian knot—a method, moreover, which many who will disapprove of its application in this instance are willing to use in a similar instance. There is a very large consensus of opinion that God is the ‘moral Governor of the Universe,’ that all *right* is his creation, that all *wrong* is the distortion or creation of his arch enemy, the personal cause and elementary Principle of Evil. I am not at all contending in this chapter whether such an opinion is true or false; I only say it is largely

all unconscious of external facts, his sister is playing a loud jerky polka of the day. In after times he never could hear a strain of the music without the whole picture of Amy Robsart’s death rising before his eyes. The music and the scene were indissolubly associated, and the vulgar music was glorified.

I do not doubt that though association and emotion may frequently indicate in a general way where beauty is to be found, they will as frequently prove delusive will-o’-the-wisps, betraying the unwary to pathless solitudes. A child is frightened at a bearded man; to the lover, sighing like a furnace, there is no eyebrow but his mistress’. Such instances may be endlessly multiplied.

held. And some not unnatural corollaries are enunciated in connection with it, with more or less confidence and authority. Many contend that as sin and evil are in their nature alien from God, and are the work of the Devil, so sin and evil are the parents of pain and death, and that pain, death, dirt, and decay are the parents of ugly sights, distressing sounds, and noisome smells. Thus the contortions of a body made by God naturally graceful, if in pain, are ugly; and the smell of rotten eggs is disgusting.¹

Many, again, are satisfied with pronouncing God the moral Governor of the Universe, and the Maker and Creator of *all* that exists except sin and wickedness. Thus he would be the God of pain, disease, decay, death, ugliness; as well as of happiness, health, life, and beauty. And in this sense they interpret the words found in 'The Book of the Prophet Isaiah'—'I create good, and I create evil. I, the Lord, do all this.'

It would hardly appear that any definite conclusion can be arrived at. They who can throw light on the question of the Origin of Evil may pronounce an authoritative opinion. Of course it is clear that,

¹ It may, however, be pointed out that some decaying things look well, smell well, and (perhaps) taste pleasantly, though of course it is always possible to object that the taste may become, or does become, 'vitiating.' Autumn tints are beautiful. Some people delight in 'high' game and 'rotten' cheese. No one, I presume, would eat a medlar till it was rotten. The smell of lately fallen and fresh-rotting leaves in a forest is delicious. Bacon remarks, in his 'Essay on Gardens,' that 'strawberry leaves dying yield a most excellent cordial smell.'

as a rule, the sights and sounds of nature are pleasing, and that, *as a rule*, ugliness and noisomeness go hand in hand with disease, pain, sin, and death. But how far, if at all, death is a state of periodic repose and cessation of active being, to serve as a necessary seed-bed and birth-place of renewed life and activity, a mere node in the cycle ; how far, if at all, on the other hand, sin is a breaking of God's intention and law of order and progression, or a necessary element in the design ; what connection, if any, there is between sin and death ; such matters are too high for us.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGIOUS AXIOMS.

IN our first chapter we laid down certain Primary General Axioms which we examined with our test of universal assent, and which we agreed are as certainly true as it is possible to conceive. In the second chapter, on the basis of these general axioms, and of other special scientific axioms, we showed how the pure sciences could be built so securely as to give the sense of certainty. Similarly, in the third chapter, we applied the same principles and processes to the arts, with the object of establishing, as far as possible, true canons of art, and laws of judgment and preference. We now proceed in the same manner with the moral sciences.

Indeed, as the method of argument will be the same for all the moral sciences, which deal with questions of right and wrong conduct, of expediency and policy, of responsibility, of duty, and of affection, we shall only take one into consideration in this treatise, and that the most important—Religion. Wherefore, in the present chapter, we begin by laying

down a foundation of Primary Religious Axioms, as follows :—

I. Truth is one and indivisible—truth cannot be controlled by opinion.

This proposition is sufficiently axiomatic and undeniable. The difficulty is that two people, two nations, two continents, two ages, have held propositions which are incompatible with one another to be true ; have lived for them, fought for them, died for them, and persecuted each other for them. The nature of the difficulty is that men have often elevated error and falsehood (consciously or unconsciously) into the realm of truth, and that almost always men have held that side or form of the truth which was evident to them to be the whole truth. Truth is one, but it is many-sided. The old story of the two knights who quarrelled about the shield, one asserting it to be silver, the other gold, is to the point. Only the story should be completed by introducing a third knight, who, having observed the shield under certain atmospheric effects, and with proper angles of reflection, should assert that it was not a shield at all but a glass mirror shaped like a shield ; and a fourth personage, the maker of the shield, who should explain that the shield was an iron shield gilded and silvered on either side. Here are two knights elevating their half truths or side truths into whole truths, and a third eager to advance his false view, or rather his

view with the slightest residuum of truth. Complete the picture by supposing these three knights (like true knight-errants) slaughtering each other on the plain, totally regardless of the fourth knight, who shrugging his shoulders and expostulating with not too much eagerness, looks on at the fatal fight.

II. *There is one God, the Governor of the Universe, perfectly good and perfectly wise.*

I have not said the 'supreme' Governor of the Universe, in order to avoid all controversy on the origin of evil ; its power, its purpose, its beginning or end.

Nor do I attempt to define 'good' and 'wise.'

Nor have I said that God is 'omnipotent,' partly for the same reason as above (to avoid a controversy on the origin of evil), but principally because the definition of 'omnipotence' (unlike that of 'goodness' and 'wisdom') seems to me to lead nowhither. The more exactly omnipotence is defined, the more the verbiage is increased and the sense lost. Those who believe in God at all, will agree that God cannot lie, cannot act contrary to his nature, cannot cease to be God. In other words, the assertion of the omnipotence of God will be found to be equivalent to the assertion that God always acts in accordance with his nature and attributes. And this, however true, will not greatly help us.

Lastly, I have not said that God is the Creator of

the Universe. The consideration of this question, and the exact explanation of what it implies, with the necessary distinctions between mind and matter, and other necessary definitions, might be very interesting, and would be sure to lead to many delicate subtleties of thought and language. But it is not necessary, in such a treatise as this, which endeavours to trace the links which bind men to one another in thought, and action, and feeling, to lay down propositions of less import, which would exclude those who believe intellectually in the eternity and indestructibility of matter.

I am fully aware that this proposition (of the existence of God), even when restricted as above, will be found unacceptable by a small but compact body of acute thinkers and accurate observers, who, after due consideration, have found themselves compelled to reject, as a part of their creed, the existence of primal and eternal goodness and intelligence. This is not the place to argue the question ; but, without attempting an argument, a few broad and brief statements of the general position may be useful. First, I would observe that I do not deny the difficulties involved in the assertion of the existence of God. My contention is that to reject this proposition involves us in greater and even more painful difficulties. Next, if the atheist should say that there was no proof of the existence of God, such a statement, if true, would furnish good ground for suspension of

judgment; but to *deny* the existence of God is a positive act of the understanding, which should only be reached on full and sufficient evidence. But, again, it seems to most men that to deny the existence of a personal and living God is to take all joy from life, all colour from anticipation of the future, all reasonableness from the great fact of existence and action, all motive for just, kind, and wise dealing. *Cui bono?* would be the only motto. Hope would no longer dress herself in the bright blue of the rainbow, but in the dim grey of the winter sky, that forecasts no spring. 'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher; but even he has a comforting 'conclusion of the whole matter'—to 'fear God and keep his commandments.' The author of 'Literature and Dogma' tells us that false interpretations of the spiritual truths of the Bible are the cause of the notorious fact that the masses will have none of the Bible. That may be so; but his interpretation, his Gospel, seems hardly likely to give life and light to the masses. It is difficult to grasp a clear idea of 'The Eternal' (what?) 'that makes for righteousness.' If grasped, it does not seem to give much comfort or warmth. Mr. Arnold, forgetful of the *ἐπιτελεια*, or the 'sweet-reasonableness,' which he so justly admires in the character of Jesus, makes merry with, and grows pleasantly scornful over, the follies of reverend prelates who worship God as a Person. Such merriment and sarcasm are neither convenient nor convincing, even when directed against

a few individuals who hold new, strange, and paradoxical views. But it would seem to be painfully out of place when it is remembered that the belief in God as a Person has been the belief of the vast majority of the whole human race in all historic times. Christianity, Mr. Arnold allows, is a great fact, and (as Mr. Mill has observed) it is easier to accept the broad statements of the Gospels with regard to the doings and sayings of Jesus than to conceive that the foundation and rise of Christianity was the work of men who imagined and forged the distinctive features of Jesus' character. And if there is one thing more clear than another, on reading these earliest records of the life of Jesus, it is that Jesus founded his Church on personal attachment to himself, and that he recognised his life to be a reflection of the life of his Father in heaven. It requires neither extensive learning nor consummate culture to perceive that Jesus believed in a personal God and Father.

This may not be an argument of any value. The Gospels may be forgeries. There may be no reliable tradition or narrative of the real facts connected with the rise and progress of Christianity. Jesus' belief may have been a noble error. It may be better to have no hope whatever for this world, and no belief in a world to come, and no enthusiasm or strength derived from leaning on the Father of the spirits of men, rather than to have a false hope, a false belief, a false enthusiasm, and an ill-gotten strength ;

but to my mind by this proposition the line is drawn between worship and non-worship, religion and non-religion, providence and machine-work, design and accident, and we will take our stand on the former. And in laying down this proposition of the existence of a personal God and Father, I merely observe, in conclusion, that I have the support of the deist, the pantheist, the polytheist, and the monotheist. The atheist, as opposed to them, may be right; but if so, I can only say with St. Paul, 'we are most miserable,' or with Pliny, that 'man is full of desires, and wants that reach to infinity, and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie, uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among such great evils the greatest good (bestowed on him) is the power of taking his own life.'

It may be asked, 'How can you say that in asserting the existence of a personal God you have the support of the polytheist and the pantheist?' I think this is an objection in form rather than in substance. To the Greeks, worshipping a multitude of gods, and fearful of incurring the wrath of any unknown god, the philosopher might have said (and in fact did say in more or less covered language), 'Oh, foolish people, do you not see that all your gods are one God?' Polytheism, to the wise man, was the exoteric view of monotheism, the many sides of the one truth, the different attributes recognised in detail of the all-pervading Unknowable. And this polytheistic conception he advocated as suited to the comprehension

of the vulgar. And not the wise man of Greece only, but of Rome also, among the Neo-Platonists and the Christians, among the Hindoos and the Northern peoples of Europe. For the hero—Zeus, the Father, Minerva, Siva, Thor, the Lord of Hosts, fulfilled his aspiration. But for women and the more susceptible sort of men, the milder qualities of the heavenly Aphrodite, Krishna, Balder, the Holy Virgin, seemed more human and sympathetic. Is it easy to believe that the Romans really believed in a God of Hinges? Or, on the other hand, did the ‘Atheist’ Lucretius, in his invocation to Venus, succeed in satisfying himself that universal procreative energy was the only living force and cause? Each man, earnestly intent on the object immediately interesting him, foreshadowed the God who would be suitable to him in his present needs. Thus even those religions which recognised only one God have usually provided a means for satisfying the popular craving. The Jew talked and thought of ‘The Holy Ones.’ To the Hindoo, many of the Gods were incarnations of the true God. The Romanist, not satisfied with a Triune God, has added the worship of the Virgin and the invocation of multitudinous Saints, all capable of exercising mediatory powers. The Protestant has the theological dogma of Three Persons but One God. Mahomedanism and Socinianism alone carry their theory into consistent practice, and recognise without reservation one God. But even here there is no attempt to apprehend God

as God. The qualifying adjective turns the attention of the worshipper into the requisite channel.

A stronger objection may be raised. 'When you assert the existence of a Divine Father, have you not a little forgotten your test of *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus?* Have the tribes of the earth in framing their Pantheons recognised in any sufficient manner the Fatherly character of their Deities as guides, and protectors, and friends?' To answer this satisfactorily would require facts and arguments that would fill a large volume, and I certainly could not attempt so great and difficult a task. But I should be inclined to answer with some hesitation that *as a whole* the tribes of the earth have recognised the fatherly character of their deities. Some obscure tribes seem to have no notion whatever of God, or Devil, or worship. Some tribes have a lively notion of appeasing the Devil by offerings and sacrifices without any corresponding belief in a Good Being. But the vast majority of nations and tribes in all historic times have recognised a Good Principal and a Bad Principal, and have frequently worshipped and propitiated both. Of course, savage races and rough times have had savage and rough gods. Such protection as was due to a man from his father and his tribe he hoped to wheedle from his god, and such obedience as he was willing to render to his father or his tribe he was willing to render to his god, with the proviso, also common to the most civilised and

Christian communities, that if he could hoodwink his god and escape the penalty he would gladly do so. I do not know that an offering of a stone egg (substituted for a real one) is worse than that of a wax doll, or that the unwonted cry of the prayerless man in the crisis of danger is better than the invocation to the god at the supreme cast of the dice. There are not many Hannahs who dedicate their living children to the service of God, and few who prefer obedience to the fat of lambs, or the offering of the heart to the profession of the lips. In one word, if I am told that it is and has been rare to find among the tribes of the earth a belief in a good and wise God, I answer it is rare to find such a belief among the most enlightened Christian nations, in any adequate sense, taking the belief as a law of life and not as a profession, and duly measuring the light shed by civilisation on motive and conduct.

But further. 'You assert that you have the support of all but a small and compact body of atheists. Have you forgotten that they are flanked by the most numerous body of worshippers that this world knows, with nearly the longest history? The historic Buddha, Gautama, lived in the time of Socrates, in the fifth century, B.C., and at the present time the number of Buddhists, with all their sects, is computed to be five hundred million souls, that is, 40 per cent., or two-fifths, of the population "of the globe"?'¹ I have

¹ See the excellent little treatise on 'Buddhism,' by T. W. Rhys Davids.

but a lame answer to return to this objection. That so many millions of people, for so many hundreds of years, should have been able to find support and encouragement and comfort, not to speak of enthusiastic ardour and proselytising fervour, against all the ills and depressing influences of life; that so much nobility and intelligence and culture and self-sacrificing zeal and eager-hearted charity should have been continuously enlisted in behalf of a religion which seems to acknowledge no God, (as we recognise God), and which holds out only the remotest possible hope of immortality for the individual, and such an immortality that, if attained, it would appear to us to be an impalpable thankless gift, not distinguishable from pure absorption into some unrecognisable, unconscious existence—this seems to me one of the great marvels of the ages and the strongest weapon in the atheist’s quiver. I do not mean that no explanation can be given. An examination into Gautama’s teaching and system, and a comparison of Buddhism with its rival, Hinduism, will supply many. Knowledge of the workings of human nature, moral and physiological, will supply more. But it is a stumbling-block to the ‘axiom’ which I do not profess to be able to put on one side.

One final objection, of an exactly opposite nature to the last, remains to be answered. ‘Is the proposition that there is a God of the nature of an axiom at all? It is not self-evident, and certainly its contradictory is not inconceivable. May it not rather be

said that we start with this proposition as a working hypothesis, out of many others, and that we become convinced of its truth by observation, and experience, and collateral evidence ; in other words, that, so far from its being an axiom, it is an inferential proposition of a very high order? And if *authority* must be called in to weight the scale, is it true that our judgment is convinced by consideration of the unreasoning and instinctive submission of the many, and not rather by the consideration of the thoughtful adhesion of great men so diverse as Socrates, Æschylus, St. Paul, Mahomet, Spinoza, Bacon, Swedenborg, Pascal, Isaac Newton, Napoleon Bonaparte, Goethe, Carlyle, Faraday, and a host of other men, better and wiser than I?'

Now I acknowledge the force of this argument with my whole heart. But I do not acknowledge it as an *objection*. I accept it as a corroboration. The proposition that there is a God can be approached on two sides. It can be approached, as above, by arguments derived from observation and experience, and by giving due weight to the matured judgment of wise and great men. But, as it appears to me, if this were all we had to trust to, our belief in a God would hang on a slender thread. Argument could be bandied against argument, some facts of this complex world of ours opposed to other facts, and great names pitted against great names. But, to my mind, the proposition that there is a God stands on its most solid foundation when it is affirmed on appeal to the test

of universal assent. The 'unreasoning and instinctive submission of the many' appears to me the strongest evidence of the existence of God, just because it is the *many*, and the submission is an *instinct*. To the 'meanest intellect,' a law implies a Law-giver, and the thing made implies a Maker ; and I should not be ashamed, before an atheist, to employ the words of St. Paul : ' That which may be known of God is manifest to men, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse.' ¹

It is well known that, as nations become more civilised, the actions of the individual tend to depend more and more on reason, and less and less on instinct. Instincts are lost, and the instinctive faculty is replaced by the lessons of reason and training. The theory of evolution supplies a clear explanation of this undoubted fact. And I think it likely that, in the progressive development of man, the proposition of the existence of God will more and more cease to be acknowledged as an axiomatic truth, and will have to be defended against ever fresh attacks by fresh arguments, drawn from the larger observation, and more varied experience, of successive generations of thinkers and workers.

¹ St. Paul speaks with equal force and clearness in the Acts of the Apostles.

III. *There are some actions and motive powers of man that are in their nature good, some that are in their nature bad ; in other words, there are virtues and vices.*

This proposition, at least by those who believe in the existence of a God, will not be denied ; but if the question were asked what actions and motive powers are good, and what are bad, it might be answered, without giving satisfaction, that those qualities are good which are in accord with the attributes of God, and conversely. But further one cannot safely go. For as the world grows older the moral and intellectual horizon extends itself, the public and individual conscience becomes more tender, and what our forefathers thought good we find to be bad, what they considered a venial error, we reject as a positive crime. It will be well to take a few instances. First from the Old Testament. The Decalogue does not forbid lying. According to the Old Testament, God puts a lying spirit into the mouth of the false prophet, and recommends Samuel to extricate himself from a difficult situation by a lie. It is a moot point with the authors of the Books of Kings and of the Chronicles whether God or Satan moved David to number Israel. To the Prophet it appears a sufficient explanation of the moral contrast between Jacob and Esau that Jehovah loved Jacob and hated Esau. The Apostle still further declares that this love and hatred pursued them as a fate while they

were still in the womb. Cruelty to our enemies, and intolerance, are accounted virtues. Saul is instigated to acts of exterminating cruelty by God. 'Do not I hate them that hate thee? Yea, I hate them right sore, *even as though they were mine enemies*,' says David, with a warm glow of heart. Slavery, polygamy, are not condemned. Of course, however, we remember that Christ forbids the Mosaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and that St. Paul tells us that God winked at the sins of the former times; but this only proves that the inspired teachers of the later age were able authoritatively to condemn the matured judgments of the wisest men of the ages before them. So also among the early Christians we see the same slow development, the same dimness of eyesight, unenlightened by the clearest precepts of Christ. There is not a hint or a word against the cruelty and injustice of slavery; not a notion of the folly, the cruelty, the iniquity of torture applied to witnesses, and to the innocent slaves of a man charged with crime. Only two sins are strongly and consistently condemned—impurity (a venial offence compared with many the human soul is capable of, a bestiality not a devilry) and heresy (a matter often partly of judgment and not entirely of heart).

Next, to come to our own times. Have we at last completely discovered what is right and what is wrong; what is virtuous and what is vicious? Surely there is still much haziness in the horizon, and much

undiscovered country beyond. It is not so long since cruelty to animals, as it was not an offence against the law, so was not popularly felt to be wrong. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has still very uphill work to accomplish in England, and in Italy the national conscience can hardly be said to be awakened at all. The compact masses of a great nation offer too much inertia. Nor can the brute instinct of cruelty to brutes be said to have been condemned by the public conscience even in England till it has ceased to be fashionable. As long as our leading journals publish the names of 'the nobility and gentry of the realm' who have made heavy bags at hot corners, in battues where the ignoble eagerness for indiscriminate slaughter replaces the keen excitement of the cock-pit; as long as pigeons are shot and maimed by the score at Hurlingham, while gentle-born ladies look on and applaud—I say nothing of fox-hunting, it has too many advocates—let it not be said that the enormity of cruelty to animals has sunk deep into our hearts. Many of the stories of calves bled to death, of lobsters boiled alive, of cod crimped alive, of pigs disembowelled alive, for our daily food, are false or greatly exaggerated, but there is a terrible substratum of truth. Nor do we easily whitewash ourselves by a sickly and sentimental resistance to scientific vivisection.

It is a motto of our copy-books that the end does not justify the means; but certainly, in some

cases, a profound conviction that the end does, at least to some extent, justify the means, is at the bottom of nearly all our elaborate social *convenances*, our white lies, our *politesses*, our kindly little hypocrisies. Our modern social and fashionable intercourse could not be carried on a moment without this mutual understanding. There are weightier matters of the law than mint and anise and cummin. But this same profound, and it would almost seem ineradicable, conviction that the end does really help to justify the means is the principal foundation of much of the false and erroneous action and thought of all times. I do not speak of the Jesuits, who have reduced the maxim (that the end justifies the means) to a system,¹ and are greatly maligned if they do not glory in it. But from the time of the old prophet who dwelt in Judea, through the early Christian times when men were delivered over to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme (a theory which bore its ripest fruit under Torquemada in Spain), up to the present days of stealing Jewish children from their parents to baptise them (the new form of Corban), of infallibility, of certain precepts of communism and trades-unionism, the old baleful principle crops out in its most insidious and protean forms. It may surely be asserted that Jesus Christ, in the progressive con-

¹ Thus Wagemann, 'Finis determinat probitatem actus;' Voit, 'Cui enim licet finis, ei et media permissa sunt;' and many other authorities.

sistency of his life, did not believe that the end could ever justify the means ; but certainly the best among us often act deliberately, with set purpose, and with the experience of a lifetime, with an opposite conviction. It is not that heroism has died among us, but that it has attired itself in fresh robes.

We are all agreed that patriotism is a virtue. Well, rightly understood, so it is. But there is something higher than patriotism, the merits of which we are not so well agreed upon. As the self-seeking of the man is swallowed up in the kinship of the family, the kinship of the family in tribal ties, tribal ties in the social duties of the state, so the pale lights of patriotism itself must fade before the full brightness of cosmopolitanism ; of a large, free, spontaneous sympathy with other races of men. This sympathy is a difficult task. Charles Lamb, in one of his essays, has written well of it in untravelled times, when his thoughts must have appeared a real revelation to his readers. But though we have fairly emancipated ourselves from such gross antipathies as originated, or anyhow imparted a sting to, the terms, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, Celestials and foreign devils, and (in a somewhat different sense, but with the same underlying inability or disinclination to see good in opponents) *those who are of God*, and *the whole world, which lieth in wickedness*, yet have we to learn, and to desire to learn, the first lessons in international love and duty. *Homo sum, humani nihil a*

me alienum puto must take the place of *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*.

A difficult task ; not so much to reject, as to cease finding satisfaction in, beliefs akin to the child's firm conviction, that 'one Englishman can lick three Frenchmen'; not so much to disbelieve that it is sweet to die for our country (and of course in the struggle to do to death as many of our adversaries as possible), as to glorify and sanctify the saying with new and better meanings. For the proverb at present glorifies and sanctifies antagonism, antipathy, carnage, war. However willingly we may subscribe to war-taxes, however cheerfully and heroically, or at least stoically, we may be ready to die for our country, however clear we may be that it is our duty to destroy the enemy opposed to us, however deeply we may feel that to beat our swords into pruning-hooks is, for the present, the Utopian dream of a philosopher or the idle enthusiasm of a prophet, yet we can hardly fail to believe that war is one of the ignorances of our time that God winks at, but that in the fullness of time he will command all men everywhere to be at peace.

Giant Slavery, like Bunyan's Giant Pope, is now stiff in its joints ; but who can fail to remember the vehement and earnest utterances in favour of slavery, not so many years ago, from eminent and good men ? Arguments addressed to the manifold sides of our nature, that it was just, necessary, humane, and

even a religious duty. Proofs on the score of philanthropy, religion, patriotism, utilitarianism, and, what is the important point, proofs *believed* by those who gave vent to them; and to men who were willing to be convinced by unbalanced authority, the silence of Christ, and the assent of the Jewish and early Christian Church, seemed very unanswerable arguments. Now-a-days no man ventures to stand up for slavery as a good institution. But, historically, as a proof of the slow progress of practical philanthropy, it must be remembered that if slavery is extinct among highly civilised nations, and the feudal system of serfs, villains, or churls, nearly so, at least as a state institution, yet it cannot be said that justice to the working classes is now at last understood or readily conceded by us.

It is a common form of speech that we are to expect honour from men and chastity from women; with the implied inference that it is a venial error for a man to be unchaste, or for a woman to act and speak with duplicity. One may acknowledge, in each case, the greater temptation, for reasons which need not be dwelt upon, while absolutely repudiating the implied concession to weakness, and firmly upholding the right. If we pity, we do not the less condemn. I believe this ensnaring form of speech is, and has been, fraught with the greatest mischief, in many ways, and that many a young man, after having been sickened

with it in the first impetuosity of his generous ardour, has learnt coldly to acquiesce in it.

Only one other point shall be named, to pass it by at present, for it will be recurred to in many of the succeeding pages. Some people believe in the necessity of the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, others only in the inward and spiritual grace; some believe in the necessity of true dogma, others of right conduct; some in the creed, others in the life; in one word, some are sacramentalists, others non-sacramentalists. These remarks do not apply to the Church of England merely, nor to present times only; the holy duty of persecuting heresy in the early Church, the splitting up of sects into smaller sects, the animosities of each form of belief against its neighbour belief, all point to the same inveterate clinging to the letter of the law. It is briefly illustrated by the amusing story of the Church of the Campbellites, which consisted of two individuals, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, of which Mrs. Campbell used to say: 'The world is compact of two pairties—the true Kirk o' Campbell and the outer world. The Kirk o' Campbell consists o' mysel' an' my gude-man, and I'm no that sure o' John.'

It will not be necessary to pursue these illustrations further. It is clear that in the complex web of human conduct we are not always sure, or well informed when sure, what is right and what is wrong,

but our axiom that some actions and motives are right and some wrong is no less true and undeniable.

IV. *Just as the thoughts and actions of men are either right or wrong, are either virtuous or vicious (as we have already agreed), so the universal history of man proves that there is an inner sense or endowment of man's nature which not only judges and discriminates between actions, but which urges that the things pronounced to be right and virtuous ought to be followed, that the things pronounced to be wrong and vicious ought to be avoided.* In the words of the Apostle, *there is an accusing and excusing conscience.* In the words of the philosopher, *there is a sense of duty (sometimes obeyed, sometimes not) which frequently opposes itself to the sense of desire, inclination, and passion.* Or it may be expressed thus: *The words 'ought,' 'must,' 'responsibility,' 'duty,' are essential and necessary words in treating the history of humanity, and cannot be replaced by any other words whatever.*

How the sense of responsibility originates, what it exercises itself upon, are questions on which a great divergence of opinion would arise, but that it exists I believe that all would agree. A child hesitates to put its finger in the fire from a fear of pain. *Here* the experience of immutable law has developed the sense of responsibility. An American Indian woman would be ashamed to eat with her husband, or to eat certain articles of food he is accustomed to eat. If

she were to do so, she would be condemned by her husband, by her tribe, by her own conscience. If asked 'why she would not eat with her husband,' her only answer would be 'that she ought not.'¹ Here immemorial tradition has developed the sense of responsibility. A naked and defenceless savage woman will defend her infant from the wild beasts. *This* is usually called instinct. A good man will lay down his life for others. Why? He may answer, 'I owe it to the ties that bind me to my fellow-men.' Or he may answer, 'It is my duty; I could not do otherwise.' Or he may answer, 'Because I love them as my own soul.' Or he may answer, "'Father, not my will, but Thine, be done.'" I do not even deny the possibility of the answer, 'It was in obedience to the laws of the highest self-interest. It was for no purpose, if not for myself, and myself alone.'

These are various instances of the calls of responsibility, and point out how the attribute may arise or how it may be exercised. I do not desire to enter into an argument on the nature, the power, the remote or proximate origin, or the right office of responsibility. I merely wish to lay down that it exists. It does not seem to depend upon *knowledge*. A babe does not know that the hot grate burns. His ignorance will not save him. He puts his finger on the bar, and it burns him. It does not seem to

¹ See Sir John Lubbock's 'Primitive Civilisation.'

depend on *intention*. A child accidentally puts his hand on the hot grate, and it burns him. A boy may accept the risk for the sake of a treasure in the fire behind. He gets his reward, but the fire burns him. A man disregards the fire to rescue his child. He will be a hero; he may succeed or fail; in any case the fire burns him.

Many will say that the first two of these four cases are not cases of responsibility. All I can say is, that Nature acts—and I say Nature ‘acts,’ because I myself believe that the term *Nature* is an un-moral impersonal term to express God, and that the laws of Nature are the un-moral laws of God regulating matter—that Nature acts against those who break her laws as if they were responsible, and on behalf of those who obey her laws as if they were responsible. The penalty for breaking, and the blessing for obeying, her laws are alike inevitable and exact. Nature is inexorable. Man has to learn what are her laws by bitter experience. Nature has no respect of persons, nor regards knowledge or ignorance, intention, or motive. Many nervous complaints, culminating in madness, and many painful diseases, of the fathers, are visited, according to undeviating law, upon the innocent children, unto the third and fourth generation. And as I believe the progress of nations and the improvement of species are greatly due to these facts, so I hold that, by keeping them clearly in view, many of the difficulties surrounding a life to come,

with its blessings and penalties, may be set at rest.

In the above, I have endeavoured to steer clear of the two great, and, at times, eager parties who have upheld on the one side free will, on the other, predestination. I hope that what I have advanced will be found compatible with the strictest notions about these two articles of belief. I trust that it will be agreed that Zeno, the pagan fatalist ; St. Augustine, the Christian predestinarian ; Huxley, the modern philosopher (who would argue that the strongest motive must implicitly govern man's conduct, and that the strongest motive is wholly built up of previous facts, each the offspring of a strongest motive) ; Pelagius, the heretic, expounder of free will ; each and all would allow that the sense of responsibility (however explained) was a *real* sense.

V. *There is a life to come.*

This has not always been held in all historic times by all people, or even by all the tribes of the earth. The writers in the Old Testament speak uncertainly of life after the grave. Annihilation is (or has been) an article of religious belief among Eastern nations. The Buddhist notion of Nirvana would seem to be that of a state where individual consciousness and motive for action disappear. Bishop Butler, in Christian times and in a Christian community, found it necessary to advance arguments for immortality

from analogy. But, on the other hand, the systematised religious beliefs of nearly every civilised nation, and most of the traditions and customs of savage nations, point to a belief in a future existence.

It is not the point what that future existence may be. Whether there be heaven and hell ; what we mean by heaven and hell ; whether heaven be an abode of ecstatic happiness or sensuous joys ; of eager work and development, or holy and glorious idleness, with crowns and praises and hymns and harps ; of painful exertion for others, not unmixed with sorrow, or self-contentment and glorification ; whether hell be an abode of undying torment, or simply of further deterioration of the disembodied spirit ; whether there be a purgatory, and, if so, whether it be a place of fiery punishment for the past, or of paternal education for the future ; whether Indian notions of transmigration are true or false ; whether the human soul is finally reabsorbed into the bosom of the Deity who sent it forth ; whether the spirits of living men and the spirits of the departed can converse together ; whether animals have souls which depart to the hunting grounds fitted to their animal nature ; these and other similar questions are not here discussed. The only point is, that there is a future existence.

Of late years Butler's arguments for immortality have been attacked. I neither desire to reproduce them, nor to defend them. I found my belief in immortality, as I do my belief in a Personal God, on

the general assent of mankind. I will not here reproduce what I have said before. As a rejection of a Personal God appears to me to leave us life without aim or design, so a rejection of immortality appears to me to leave us life without just hope or calm joy. And it further appears to me that if the facts on which arguments for immortality have been founded are denied, or differently and more correctly explained ; if the proofs hitherto relied on are found to be false or unsubstantial ; then there is room for suspension of judgment, but not for the active form of denial or disbelief. And lastly, I say, if there is no such thing as immortality, then, of all living beings, man is the most miserable.

Though not entirely in accordance with my system, I will lay down one more proposition of exceeding importance, but I think by no means of universal assent. It is that *sincerity is a virtue*. It is that no man can be considered a worthy man who is not sincere. It is that, as good works without charity are pronounced worthless, so human actions and professions without sincerity are worthless. And yet how few believe this ! Sincerity is not a part of the code of morals of many savage races. Many civilised races have either ignored it or scorned it, or humiliated it to a low position among the virtues. The exigencies of modern civilised life appear to demand an admixture of hypocrisy. The Jesuits have by

precept and practice developed insincerity into a code. The American (may we not couple with him the keen Britisher?) looks upon his fellow-citizen who has preyed upon the weak and helpless by keeping on the windy side o' the law, and has established for himself a colossal fortune—the miserable aim of his life—without instinctive disgust and shame; on the contrary, with a certain reluctant approval and admiration; and he 'guesses he is a kinder smart man.' And it is certainly a deep, and I think, not an uncharitable conviction of Protestants, that the Romish Church, from the earlier centuries to the present time, from the foisting on the unsuspecting and ignorant world of the shameless forgery of the False Decretals during the popedom of Nicholas I. to the monstrous fiction of Infallibility of Pope Pius IX., cannot be regarded as above the suspicion of not greatly regarding the beauty and religious necessity of sincerity. This, of course, is not a condemnation of individuals, but of the whole Church in its system and teaching. Insincerity would appear to be a necessary element in the system and teaching of those who persecute and anathematise heretics because they are sincere, who demand the total surrender of the heart and conscience to the keeping of the priest, who call the evil-liver, adulterer, murderer, breaker of social and family ties 'most pious,' if only he protect and endow the Church. And if it be said that this is a severe charge to bring against a Church, I must acknowledge

that the *odium theologicum* is *practically* much the same in other communions, but *theoretically* there is a difference. The Romish Church elevates insincerity into a system and a necessity, the Protestant churches are betrayed into it. The one teaches and justifies it in books, and manuals, and public acts; the others only spasmodically, or with half-hearted and individual action.

Sincerity! the most elementary and necessary of all the virtues, without which love or charity cannot exist! Heraclitus and Bacon speak of ‘dry light;’ Ruskin of the ‘innocent eye;’ our Lord of the ‘single eye,’ and that is the best of all ways of expressing the same idea. The eye which sees things as they are, which acts upon facts. Jesus is gentle with the heretic who did works of healing without becoming his follower; he loves the feeble Pliable who desires to inherit eternal life; he does not condemn the woman taken in adultery; he is good to the unthankful and to the evil; he forgives his ignorant murderers. Only one thing moves his withering scorn, indignation, and condemnation—the insincerity and hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Consider Jesus breaking through the shackles of custom as easily as the strong Samson burst the material cords which entangled him, and consider us bound hand and foot in the bondage of degrading fashion. Consider Jesus taking to his world-wide heart, which did not regard the ties of earthly kindred

or nation, all forms of goodness regardless of the trappings in which they were wrapped, and consider us stopping short at the sight of unaccustomed or unacknowledged trappings, and retiring in shame, pain, and disgust. When Nelson resolved to continue the naval engagement at Copenhagen, contrary to the express orders of Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, the captain of his ship pointed to the warning signal. Whereupon he held the telescope to his blind eye, and said, humorously and doggedly, 'I do not see the signal, sir.' What Nelson did in facetious defiance, we do in sober earnestness. We raise our telescope to the blind eye, and do not look up at God's eternal and universal signals. We are seeking after a sign, when the sign is ever before us ; like Bunyan's man with the muck-rake when the crown was over his head. We say, 'Let one arise from the dead.' Not so, is God's answer. Dead lessons will not teach those who will not learn living lessons.

Let this, then, be one of our propositions, and let it also be our motto—that sincerity is the most elementary and necessary of all virtues—let us make it our touch-stone. We will not utterly hate Torquemada, because we believe he was in earnest. Nor will we utterly condemn Knox's uncompromising cruelty, because of his manifest sincerity. So with men living in our own present world ; let us love, reverence, and sympathise with our strongest opponent, however much he thinks us wrong, and we think him wrong ;

only so be that he is sincere. And let us reject with mingled scorn and hatred—the only scorn and hatred permitted us—all forms of insincerity and hypocrisy ; whether they make for us, or against us. True-heartedness and wrong-headedness rather than false-heartedness and correct views !

The above are all the propositions I intend to lay down as of sufficient importance and of sufficiently universal assent to be called religious axioms. If it be objected that as strong an assent will be accorded to other religious propositions, or that many propositions of exceeding, it may be said, of infinite importance, have been omitted—as that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, is God, came down from heaven to save sinners ; or that the Bible is the inspired word of God and the rule of life—I would answer that these propositions, fully granting their importance, whether they be true or false, have by no means gained universal assent. On the contrary, they have gained the assent (and what sort of assent ?) of a very small fraction of the world, in a very small portion of the world's history. By us, therefore, it is impossible they should be considered axioms. True we must hold them, if they can be deduced from our axioms. True they may be, even if we cannot deduce them from our axioms ; but in no case are they axioms. If it be urged that these propositions, if held by only a few, for only a short time in the world's history, are yet

held by the leaders of the most enlightened civilisation that has yet appeared, I should feel constrained to deny it (the reasons of my denial will appear hereafter), and also to add that God cares for others as much as for those who have lived in the brightness of this enlightened civilisation.

One more objection may be raised :—‘ These axioms are good, they are important ; but they only lie at the threshold of life. There is nothing here of love and trust, which are the elements of spiritual life. Spiritual life and religion require axioms, or, rather, principles, of love and trust.’ To which I heartily assent. I only observe that this book, confining itself to what we *know* and *believe*, must put on one side questions of *love* and *trust*, *except so far as they are grounded on knowledge and belief*. Thus, before we can trust God, we must know that God is. Further on, we shall revert to this question of the higher spiritual life.

CHAPTER V.

THE ESSENTIAL IN RELIGION.

BEFORE entering on new ground, it will be convenient to summarise the results already arrived at. We commenced by asserting that only those propositions could be pronounced certainly true which satisfied the test that they had been held always, at all times, by all men. On examination we found ourselves unable to mention any proposition which satisfied that test in its entirety. Therefore we concluded that no proposition could be rigorously held to be certainly true. We further concluded that, as no other reliable test presented itself, those propositions which most closely satisfied the test reached the highest ground of certainty, so that they might be called 'as certain as anything can be.' From this highest ground of certainty, we dropped to lower and lower standards of exceeding probability, great probability, justifiable hypothesis, surmise, possibility. In the sciences of pure mathematics we found axioms established in accordance with this *highest* ground of certainty—they were as certain as anything can be—and the vast superstructure of propositions logically established on

them as on a solid foundation, we found to be assented to with a conviction that justified the epithet *mathematical certainty*. In mixed mathematics and many experimental sciences, we found laws established, it is true, with greater labour, and requiring for their enunciation mightier intellects, but still such that they might rightly be called as certain as anything can be, and the results grounded on them we found to be assented to with a conviction that amounted to *moral certainty*. In some of the experimental sciences the underlying axioms, principles, and laws were either imperfectly and fragmentarily enunciated, or were little more than ingenious hypotheses ; and the highest ground of certainty was replaced by an amount of conviction varying from the highly probable to the possible. Again, in the arts, the conclusions arrived at were established occasionally on a firm scientific basis, but more frequently on principles or laws expressing the common sense of the many.

Then, observing by the way, with Matthew Arnold, that conduct controlled by religion is the most important part of life, and granting that in religion we reach the greatest chaos of contending beliefs and of mere opinion, and that certainty can least of all be arrived at, we found that even here many elementary propositions, if not held by *all* men, nor *everywhere*, nor *at all times*, were yet *very generally* (in their essence) held by men, nations, and races, who in other respects managed to differ from one another, with

the strongest religious convictions. And, ourselves being convinced, with the generality of mankind, of the truth of these elementary propositions, we enunciated them as religious axioms in the following terms:—

(1.) Truth is one and indivisible ; truth cannot be controlled by opinion.

(2.) There is one God, the Governor of the Universe, perfectly good and perfectly wise.

(3.) There are some actions and motive powers of man that are in their nature good, some that are in their nature bad ; in other words, there are virtues and vices.

(4.) There is an inner sense or endowment of man's nature, which not only judges and discriminates between actions, but which urges that the things pronounced to be right and virtuous ought to be followed, that the things pronounced to be wrong and vicious ought to be avoided.

(5.) There is a life after death.

(6.) Sincerity is a virtue.

Some will tell us that they cannot accept these religious axioms, and will take special exception to (2) and (5). They will explain how the figment of a personal God arose, they will brush aside the cobwebs of a futile philosophy whereby Butler, arguing from analogy, demonstrated the intrinsic probability of immortality. The *Unde* being (we must presume) clearer to them than to the generality of mankind,

they will be able to overthrow the *Quo* with weapons from a new armoury. 'The lessons of Geology,' they will say, 'the lessons from the life of prehistoric man, a candid apprehension of the present facts of civilised nations and of savage tribes, a true insight into the structure of the brain of man, its secular development, and its constructive and acquisitive properties, the right understanding of the nature of dreams; all these point to one conclusion that, granting there were no God, man would have made one for himself (as he has doubtless often made to himself false gods); and, granting there were no immortality, man would have established a theory of life after death, and of rewards and punishments beyond the grave. As, then, on the one hand, nothing is less surprising than that such conceptions should have arisen in the minds of men, though founded not on truth but on the promptings of a false logic and a distorted imagination, so on the other hand there is not the faintest scintilla of evidence that there is a personal God, nor any the slightest proof of a life to come. Under such circumstances, we not only decline to believe in these propositions; we must further add, boldly, earnestly, and respectfully, that we disbelieve them. It is sufficient ground for disbelief not only to show that no proof can be advanced in favour of a proposition, but also to demonstrate how the belief we oppose gained a traditional power and sway over the

minds of men in earlier ages, and how it retains its influence still.'

Now we have never intended this to be a treatise of dogmatic utterance or of argument in favour of this or that proposition. Our weakness is our strength. We have called these propositions axiomatic with definite purpose, to attempt no proof. We have only relied on our test. The heart of humanity, with its emotions, hopes, and aspirations, its sense of the fitness of things, of the requirements of justice, of the manifold signs of design and of the necessity of design, has buoyed itself on a general belief in a personal God and a life to come. Moreover, whatever answer might be given to such arguments as above, it is not here that it will be found. And so at this point (if needs be) we must part company with that sturdy, honest, earnest phalanx of true-hearted workmen, working a good work in the vineyard of this world, though atheists by conviction, hopeless of a personal future (by choice, as one might say), and yet, many of them, cheery and kindly—christian in all but the name which they reject.

On the other hand there are some who will say that they assent to our religious axioms, because they are consonant with the tenets of 'revealed religion,' or with the 'voice of the church.' But it will hardly be necessary to observe of such, that their agreement with us is (or may be) purely nominal, and that they are arguing in a vicious circle. It may be true that,

because there is a God, therefore there is a revelation ; but, of course, while it is a question whether there is a God at all, it is useless to appeal to a revelation. Those then who, with us, hold to the truth of the proposition that there is a personal God, must be willing to add, ' I do not believe this merely because I find it in the Bible, nor entirely because I have been taught it ; but because I find most men in all ages profess to believe it ; and I myself *ex animo* consent to it, as consonant with the facts of life.'

So far in the way of retrospect. And now, of the *facts* hitherto established, we wish to select two, and after stating them clearly, to make what would appear to be plain and natural inferences. And in each case we shall find that human history rejects these apparently plain and natural inferences, and offers a paradoxical phenomenon of its own.

The *first fact*, or rather, *series of facts*, we have established, is as follows :—

The *sciences*, properly so called, are laid on the firmest and most solid foundation of uncontroverted and incontrovertible axiom, and the final results most strongly impress the mind with the sense of absolute certainty. Vigorous thinkers, who take the trouble to examine, are convinced of the truth of the final results ; and vigorous thinkers who do not take the trouble, or have not the time to examine, are well content to assent to the truth of the final results. It is sufficient for them, remembering that art is longer than life, to

see that the foundation is good, the methods sure, the results (so far as they can be tested by observation) correct, the workers honest and earnest, and to know that there is no division in the camp. The *arts* are laid on a less solid foundation of uncontroverted or incontrovertible axiom, and consequently there is a greater scope for differences of opinion. There are divisions in the camp, and there is room for argument ending in final disagreement. In the *moral sciences*, and, above all, in *religion*, there is the least possible agreement with regard to the elementary axioms; there are few or none of these axioms which are not greatly controverted, the methods of establishing propositions on the elementary axioms are exceedingly varied, and, consequently, there is the greatest possible scope for differences of opinion. The divisions in the camp are abrupt, many, and of all characters. The final disagreements are very great and very important.

It would appear to follow, therefore, that in religious matters there was no room whatever for hatred and angry feelings, for contempt, for priestcraft, or for intolerance, and the largest scope possible for charity and for gentle persuasiveness. In *the arts* men might agree to differ without any great difficulty, and various schools of art might be set up, which should regard each other with no unbrotherly arrogance or vexation. If, however, there was room for intolerance at all, it would be for difference of opinion in *the*

sciences.¹ Scorn, anger, the virulence of an indignant press, might (perhaps) be justly visited on a school that should pronounce and teach (for instance) that two circles could cut one another in three points. The laws of the country might even be amended to eradicate such abnormal and monstrous mischief, and such corruption of the manifest truth. Bonds and imprisonment might await the obstinate professors who should blind their eyes to the simplest facts, and to the most manifest axioms. An *auto-da-fé* (with the title altered, but not the essential element of the *fire*) might be applied with considerable advantage. Nay, if the reprobation of the world could accompany such criminals past their death to a place of torment, it would be well (with tears) to consign them to everlasting chains, for attempting to corrupt the youth, and to bind the world in fatal error, turning their backs on the clear light of God's universal laws and saying, I see, when they see not.²

But human history tells a different tale, and points to a concurrent paradoxical phenomenon.—If a man

¹ That is, in the older and well established sciences. Such fragmentary sciences as geology or political economy we are not here concerned with. Geology, for instance, is still dependent, for many of its conclusions, on the discovery of further fact, and, at present, the body of evidence is very incomplete. There is plenty of room for ingenious and probable surmises, hardly for dogmatic utterances.

² I shall perhaps be told that this is shocking. Shocking at least, if it were not silly. Be it so. Only, I would urge in return on those who would attempt to crush heterodox opinion in religion, that such conduct appears to me silly. Silly at least, if it were not shocking.

starts an absurd proposition in *science*, he is only met with a little good-natured ridicule,¹ and his strongest persistence to advertise himself and gain notoriety, will not enable him to escape the obscurity that is so distasteful to him. If men differ in matters of *art*, there is (occasionally) a little hot blood, a little warfare of tongues, epithets are exchanged that might have been kept in the background, each man has, in a corner of his brain, a Dunciad for his opponents; but, on the whole, there is probably not more of this than is requisite to thrust back presumption, and to teach ignorance its place. Criticism is disagreeable, but its function is important, and indeed necessary. Towns would not be healthy without scavengering.

But in matters of *religious opinion*, where men should be most charitable, indulgent, and friendly with those who honestly differ from them; here, throughout history, we are always confronted with the greatest amount of harshness, cruelty, and intolerance. Power has exercised itself to the uttermost in persecution. Where possible, the power of the law and government; where not possible, the power of public opinion, of self-constituted authority (of the priest, or the church, or, it may be, the prophet), and of the domestic tribunal, has been brought to bear. In the words of Christ, 'The brother shall *betray* the

¹ That is, generally. The days of Galileo are passed. And such wild words of foolish sarcasm as have been bandied between Tyndall and Bastian do no harm to any but themselves.

brother to death, and the father the son ; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.' And the hyperbole of oriental language is even exceeded by the monstrosity of fact.

If it be urged that a difference of opinion in religious matters is of far more serious import than a difference of opinion in scientific matters ; that hell-fire is in prospect for the erring, and their hope of eternal life at stake, and that therefore in such cases severe measures are necessary, I merely answer at present that, granting the *exceeding importance* of a right opinion in matters of religion, measures must come from men, the men from whom they come must be men of right opinions, and who is to decide who is the man of right opinions ? I grant neither the justice nor the policy of severe measures, but that is not the point ; the point is, that right opinion and power do not necessarily go together, that right opinion is itself a matter of opinion, that the rightness of the opinion is the very thing that is on its trial, and that power is unable to adjudicate at the trial. I say that if intolerance in itself be justifiable and politic, no man, nor set of men, can arrogate the right.

Now for the *second series of facts, and natural inferences from those facts*.—Though the *axioms* of science are the common property of all men, yet the *results* of science are the essential property of only a few ; of men of leisure and robust intellect, who are

capable of mastering and apprehending the complicated difficulties of the problems, and of grasping the solutions in their fulness. The inductive and the deductive powers must be exercised to their utmost, and improved by use and experience; the empiric imagination must be largely drawn upon, and severely chastened. Consequently authoritative utterances are the property of a small class, and the busy outside world must listen to the experts with reverence and without contradiction. A great poet like Tennyson may not dictate to a Tyndall, a great theologian like Newman may not oppose the scientific enunciations of a Faraday, nor do the Tennysons or Newmans of the world attempt or desire to oppose or dictate. Indeed hardly does the mob. For though the *whole* world (learned and ignorant, wise men and fools), demand 'Panem et Circenses,' *i.e.*, food for the body and relaxation for the mind, and the thoughtful and earnest cry out for religion, it is only a few who cry articulately for knowledge and æsthetic gratification. Therefore the few who do hunger for intellectual food, and get their hunger more or less appeased, are masters of the situation. There is no appeal from their verdict.

As regards the arts, the line cannot be drawn so strictly, but the same is true essentially. The arts are chiefly the heritage of the cultured classes, and the mass of people have no time, and often no inclination, to be cultured. Still the dictum of the cultured

classes—even when they agree among themselves, which they do not always do—is not entirely irreversible by external judgment. For, though only few are learned, all of all classes have tastes, and the æsthetic element will be fed and nurtured on some food, even though it be unwholesome, coarse, rough, and strongly flavoured. Those whom we designate the lower classes are easily moved and interested by gorgeous spectacular effects ; by dresses, processions, gold, glitter, dramatic representations, brass bands with big drums and beating cymbals, by rhetorical display and vigorous oratory, by suggestive pictures, by ear-catching songs, and by ballads. And not only by bravery and boisterousness, by loudness, pomp, and mirth. They dearly love the strain of melancholy. They accept the tragic as well as the comic muse. The stately prose and imagery of the Bible is often their best, if not their only poetry, and they are charmed with the simplicity of Bunyan perhaps even more than the ‘upper’ classes. So that now and again a correction of the finical fineness of an effete and fastidious culture has proceeded upwards, sometimes as the result of the untutored love for barbaric splendour and coarse magnificence, more often from the desire for directness of aim, clearness of perception, simplicity of purpose, plainness of utterance, homeliness of illustration.

Moreover, that which constitutes the sensuous side of our nature is almost always entangled with the

emotional ; and if the due education of the sensuous side is a work of time only to be indulged in by the leisurely classes, I believe it to be true, and I hope to demonstrate, that the emotional side is equally the inheritance of all classes, and is best educated by living free lives ; that it is a gift, free as air, to all. And this entanglement of emotion and æsthetic gratification occasionally gives the uncultured classes a right to dictate to the cultured classes. For instance, it is probably true that the flower of love, considered both in its sensuous and emotional aspect, is as tender and sweet a creation in the home of a cottager as in the heart of a prince, and is far less an exotic. So poetry will mix itself with questions of religion, and dramatic representation will appeal to the sentiments of justice, honour, truth, reverence, chastity, courage, temperance, gentleness, patience, and other virtues. The most painful play I have myself ever witnessed, is 'The School for Scandal,' just because Sheridan's aim was to produce a succession of bright and sparkling images, which should tickle the imagination and the sense of incongruity, and leave the heart free ; and so well has he succeeded, that the plot, purposely unsubstantial, shocks one like a ghost appearing, an unbidden guest, at the high feast. The jokes cracked over the walnuts and the wine, stab like daggers when the dead hand of buried recollections of sin and shame is laid on the shoulder. So the latent villanies (though dimly portrayed) of Joseph

Surface's slimy nature jar horribly amid the bright unreal picture, like Satan marring the dream of Eve. It is a 'dance of death.'

In fine, then, as regards the arts, while the cultured classes have the *chief* right to make dogmatic utterances, the uncultured classes occasionally have a right to exercise a veto, and even to substitute an utterance of their own, which must and shall make itself heard and obeyed.

Next, as regards the moral sciences and religion. Here, whether all men and all classes have an equal right to have an opinion, all men and all classes claim that right, and where they can, exercise it. We have said that in matters of science the learned classes dictate to the world, and accept no dictation from the world, and that in matters of art, the cultured classes *generally* dictate to the world, and, *generally*, accept but little dictation from the world. But no similar classes have any exclusive right to enforce their opinion on the world in matters of moral sciences and religion. On the contrary, many times, it is the uncultured and unlearned classes which have enforced their opinion on the world, unexpectedly and irrevocably. The foolish things of this world have confounded the wise. Spiritual truths have been hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. Many times democracy has uttered its voice, and overwhelmed respectability has stamped the utterance with its approval. A dabbler will flounder in un-

fathomable problems of political economy, and demonstrate his conclusions with clearest evidence ; and a revolution of the oppressed people will bury him and his theories, him and his, in undistinguishable ruin. What do trades-unionists (right or wrong) care for prudential maxims suited to quiet times ? What do communists care for arguments drawn up for the special behoof of prosperous classes moving in a world of which they have no cognizance ? What did the small and seemingly insignificant sect of Quakers care for the fashionable pretexts of the day, potent though flimsy, for retaining slavery ? Unlettered Mahomet, rough Knox, a certain body of fishermen, would not have moved society to its lowest depths, and created a lasting impression, had they been squeamish about the opinions of their 'betters,' and had they believed that possession and tradition were all the ten points of the law.

On this subject Browning writes vigorously after his wont. He is speaking of the folly and iniquity of legal torture ; how Religion used it for her ends, and how the world rebelled and would bear with it no longer. These are his words :—

Even so they were wont to tease the truth
Out of loth witness (toying, trifling time)
By torture : 'twas a trick, a vice of the age,
Here, there, and everywhere, what would you have ?
Religion used to tell Humanity
She gave him warrant or denied him course.
And since the course was much to his own mind,

Of pinching flesh and pulling bone from bone
 To unhusk truth a-hiding in its hulls,
 Nor whisper of a warning stopped the way,
 He in their joint behalf, the burly slave,
 Bestirred him, mauled and maimed all recusants,
 While, prim in place, Religion overlooked ;
 And so had done till doomsday, never a sign
 Nor sound of interference from her mouth,
 But that at last the burly slave wiped brow,
 Let eye give notice as if soul were there,
 Muttered, 'Tis a vile trick—foolish more than vile—
 Should have been counted sin ; I make it so :
 At any rate, no more of it for me—
 Nay, for I break the torture engine—thus !'
 Then did Religion start up, stare amain,
 Look round for help and see none, smile and say
 ' What, broken is the rack? Well done of thee !
 Did I forget to abrogate its use ?
 Be the mistake in common with us both !
 One more fault our blind age shall answer for,
 Down in my book denounced though it must be
 Somewhere. Henceforth find truth by milder means.'
 Ah, but, Religion, did we wait for thee
 To ope the book, that serves to sit upon,
 And pick such place out, we should wait indeed !

The application will not be required in set words.

I say, then, that in matters of the emotions and conscience, if all men and classes have not an *equal* right to express an opinion, at least it is difficult to disallow the claim they advance that they have such right, and quite impossible to restrict that claim to any class.

But, as before, *human history points to a concurrent paradoxical phenomenon.*

Human history tells us that in matters of emotion and conscience, where power should most of all step into the background, where least of all should any class arrogate to itself the right to dictate, to fulminate, to dogmatise, where *authority* is most specially the attribute of the *individual*, be he rich or poor, gentle or simple, there power is most oppressive, there a class is most dictatorial, there the priesthood most condemns the prophet. Human history tells this tale with monotonous uniformity. It is the same whether we set ourselves to consider the fetish of some degraded and savage tribe, or the idols of some effete oriental race, or the nobler objects of worship of the most civilised nations. An attempt, always to a considerable extent, and sometimes wholly, successful, is made to hand over authority to a class. The outer world is deprived of its freest inheritance, the gift of its birth. 'Nay,' saith the priest, 'this people which knoweth not the law is accursed.'

'This people which knoweth not the law is accursed'! Doubtless in certain cases, with some modification of phrase, the maxim is true. For instance, it is true that a layman in scientific matters has no right to express an opinion in contravention of established results. It is true that a layman in matters of art will do well to keep silence, or, if he feels bound to protest against some orthodox opinion as regards the canons of art, to speak with fear and trembling, and distrust of his own judgment. In these cases it

is true that the people who do not know the law must practise the lessons of caution and control, and listen with submission and reverence to the dogmas of their masters and superiors. But in religious matters, where the maxim is least of all applicable, it is most rigidly applied. In religion, it is most reasonable to expect to meet with many schools of opinion, and most fitting, if not to approve them, to allow them without restraint in word and deed ; and yet it is in religion that the strongest attempt is made by the privileged classes to discountenance and crush heterodox schools. Hence the painful reality and real pain of the expression 'odium theologicum.' Hence the 'survival,' in what are called 'the religious papers,' of forms of heated clamour, vehement abuse, and ungenerous insinuations, which have long been condemned by the modern tone of society, and the liberal impulses and sentiments of educated men.

'This people that knoweth not the law is accursed' ! As if, indeed, the promulgation of God's messages of light and life had been the inheritance of a privileged class ! Whereas it is sufficiently manifest that most of the great reformers and teachers in history have come from the people. Despised Jesus, ignorant Mahomet, rough Luther, such unlearned men as Bunyan and Fox, take a step in advance of polished Erasmus, or refined and over-sensitive Savonarola, and have revolutionised the stagnant world. It is true (if we may believe the most trust-

worthy traditions) that Gautama was the son of a king, and immediate heir to a throne ; but he found it necessary, before he could do his great work, only second to that of Jesus of Nazareth, to relinquish all claims to country, wife, child, and home, and the responsibilities and glories of state, and to adopt the beggar's yellow robe as the symbol of poverty, humility, and self-sacrifice.

On the other hand, history points to but few notable instances of men, great in station, who have retained their high social position, and yet carried out a great religious reform to a successful issue.

But further. It is not only true that no class can justly arrogate to itself the sole right to lay down the law in religious matters, but it is here specially that there is imperative need that due control and oversight should be exercised by the good sense of the community, not only to check extravagance and vagaries, not only to correct overweening sacerdotalism, which I have spoken of above, and shall refer to more particularly hereafter ; but, above all, to nip in the bud all forms of hypocrisy. For in religion, as there is a special difficulty in detecting pretence and hypocrisy, so a muse is strongly tempted and very liable to go in borrowed plumes of knowledge, wisdom, and authority, and to assume a virtue if he has it not. Now it is not difficult to detect charlatanism in science. It is true that in the dark ages a scientific man was credited with more than he pos-

sessed ; and this error reacted in two opposite directions. A Roger Bacon, on the one hand, found it impossible to prevent himself being thought a dealer in the black art, and a Paracelsus or a Cagliostro, on the other hand, found how easy it was to rise to power and influence by pretending to possess gifts the multitude was determined to shower upon him ; and being a humbug, he acted accordingly. But this state of things is no longer possible. And moreover, at the bottom of the charlatanism of a Paracelsus or a Cagliostro was a solid foundation of real experience and knowledge above that of the vulgar, whereas it is quite possible, and no infrequent phenomenon, for the dealer in spiritual wares to be supremely destitute of spiritual commodities, and to be a charlatan and a cheat, or perhaps merely a barren nonentity and a dry stick. This unfortunately is still very possible, and, at the present day, there is a goodly number of our spiritual pastors and masters, who, in their weekly exhortations from the platform of the pulpit, prove that they have not even a suit of choice words and phrases wherewith to clothe the naked phantoms of an empty brain and sluggish heart, who cannot work, who will not beg, and who do not know how to steal—gracefully or ungracefully.

It is important that in what has been advanced above there should be no room for misunderstanding. It has been asserted that the authority to express an opinion, and to enunciate a dogma in religion, is not

confined to one class, and that all men, *à priori*, have an indisputable right (and the right implies duty) to determine for themselves what is true, but it has not been asserted that all men are equally capable of determining what is true. It has not even been asserted that some class or some form of education would not be more likely to produce and discover the capable men. God has his natural teachers, his born apostles, priests, and prophets ; the only thing for us to do is to proclaim, in the words of the third Napoleon, *la carrière ouverte aux talents*. Christianity should be (and so should all religions) the development of a great commonwealth ; and the glory and the strength of the most feudal hierarchy in the world—the Church of Rome—consisted in its recognition of this at a serious crisis in its history, when its great abbacies, priories, and bishoprics were likely to become the appanages and entailed properties of great families. Forms of free election and strenuous laws against nepotism and simony, even if of little avail against power, violence, and corruption in rough times, yet showed the undeviating inner mind of the church, and a shrewd sense of what was wise and politic. And so it was, that not the feudal character, but the popular character, of the Church of Rome, upheld it in its times of difficulty, and strengthened it in its days of prosperity. In revolutionary France it was said that the marshal’s *bâton* lay hid in every soldier’s kit. So in papal Christianity the monk in his novi-

ciate had golden dreams of the day when the triple crown might replace the cowl.

La carrière ouverte aux talents. Work in God's vineyard for all. As a rule priests and princes come from the privileged classes, prophets and reformers from the people, and there is room for all in this working world. A noble nation, single-hearted, honest, and righteous, will recognise God's natural teachers whencesoever they arise, and a large-minded education of heart and head will welcome them under all garbs, however diverse, and reach them that helping hand so often needful in the early struggle. The priest and prince will generally stand without assistance by the authority of prescriptive right, and indeed will frequently require to be checked and restrained rather than strengthened; but in all cases it is good to extend a wise and generous sympathy.

But it may be said that though in theory it is true that all classes have a right to an opinion, and that though occasionally great teachers have sprung up from the body of the rude and unlettered multitude, yet, practically and historically, the Church has been the repository of all truth worth having, of classic lore, of æsthetic craft, of creative imagination, of the spiritual and immortal issues of higher life; and the fact will be pointed out that not only are we indebted in the Middle Ages to the Church for the preservation of the noble work of the old world, but also that the

Church was the salt of the world, giving savour to life, and preserving it sweet, producing a Dante, a Michael Angelo, a Raphael, a Copernicus, a Gregory the Great, a Benedict, a St. Francis. If it had not been for the Church, it may be urged, the world would have relapsed into the barbarism of its barbarian conquerors, and life would be such as we find it in Tartary, or Morocco, or Nepaul.

This is, however, only one side of the picture. We are considering the most powerful institution the world has ever seen, ruling the mind of Europe with an iron sway, strong in self-discipline, and powerful over the emotions and superstitions of semi-civilised tribes and nations struggling for their early liberties ; and it is hardly surprising that, now and again, it glorified the dull and lurid annals of rapine, murder, lust, and anarchy, with a few bright and wonderful gleams of living truth and beauty. But the later glory of the Church was as the glory of the second French Empire. A gorgeous and imposing exterior, but, in its secret springs of action, imperfect at the first, and by slow degrees corrupting and corrupted. A centralising influence, effective and absolute, but destructive of all independent and self-sustained effort. It held its hand at the throat of humanity ; it chilled the impulsive leap of the heart of man, placed manacles on his limbs, and held the wine of stupefaction to his lips. There was no free play of thought or imagination apart from its permission, no possibility

of passing out of the state of tutelage. The 'Index Expurgatorius' was not merely a book at Rome, but a sentiment strongly impressed on the brain and heart. And now the Church has no longer such powers over the destinies of mankind, not because it has descended from its lofty throne, but because the arts and sciences, and much of the deepest religious emotion, have thrown off the impeding shackles of a crushing despotism, and have ascended to allied and friendly thrones.

To sum up the whole argument—God's natural servants are found at all times, in many strange and diverse fashions, and among all classes. *La carrière ouverte.* Liberty, fraternity.

But it may be said, there is much talk here of *opinion*, none of *life*. Is no stress to be laid on the religious life, as a result of religious faith?

How far a correct religious faith is bound up with right living I intend to consider later on. A good and wise life is the product of education, experience, a generous soul, favourable conditions. There must be good seed in a good soil, with concurrence of advantageous external circumstances. But these are no more the property of a class than correct religious faith is; indeed, far less. That in the complex conditions of human existence the distinction the mind draws between some virtues and vices (in the *concrete*) is to some extent a matter of education, as well

as that religious opinion is formed and strengthened by wise counsel, is indubitable. But it is just as clear that the elements on which to found the final judgment are common property, and it is not very clear who shall teach the judgment and inform the conscience. There is no question here of abstruse theological or ecclesiastical doctrine, which is as much a matter of science for the leisurely and learned classes as good painting or knowledge of chemistry; only of such simple guidance for simple lives that a way-faring man, though a fool, shall not need more, and shall not err for lack of it. And as for more elaborate rules of conscience, it is to be feared that when a man departs from the teaching of his father and mother, if it has been worthy, and from the plain general dictates of the New Testament, or other similar self-convincing and elemental works, coming home to the heart and conscience of all men, and thinks to rely on the formulas of Jesuit priests or the cases of Jeremy Taylor, they will almost certainly do him more harm than good. Not that I have heard that 'Rules of Conscience' ever are consulted. The feeble-minded and scrupulous, who cannot satisfy their own conscience, and who are so unfortunate as to have no friend with whom to consult and from whom to accept advice and sympathy, generally seek relief in confession at the hands of the ordained priest, and thereby live a sickly and stagnant life-in-death in place of the vigorous life of liberty.

The object of simple religious faith is right living.

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

Everyone will agree that he can't be wrong whose life is in the right, though many will dispute the implied inference that it is no matter what the creed is. But at least the *object* of the creed is to make the life right. This must not be forgotten. Creeds are not made for their own sakes, nor are hierarchies and ecclesiastical dispensations. It may be that hierarchies and ecclesiastical dispensations are important; it may be they are essential for the guidance of the people; but, as they do not exist for themselves or their own honour, so their mission begins and ends in teaching by precept and example how to live rightly. If, then, such necessities as hierarchies and ecclesiastical dispensations have forgotten the end of their existence, and have begun to think the creed is the essential thing, or still worse, that they and their aggrandisement are the essential thing; then, if they be a necessity, they are a necessary evil, and the world must bear with them as best it may, awaiting the day of deliverance from them and other such encumbrances.

Now, to take the worst offender in this matter, as a sample of what all religious work is likely to come to, unless purified and strengthened from within by vigilant self-control and high enthusiastic aims, and from without by free, fearless criticism. I mean

the Church of Rome. Its history contains too many melancholy examples of the end forgotten in the means ; of the shadow pursued in place of the substance, from the time the Church first felt its power, towards the end of the fourth century after Christ, to the most modern times.

In the Gospel we read that when, during the last few days of Jesus' life, his bitterest enemies were gathering together with one intent around him ; when his hours of teaching were spent in idle contention with men who, seeing, would not perceive, and, hearing, would not hear ; when the Pharisees, waxing fierce and reckless, provoked him to speak of many things, we read how one scribe among the many, one Abdiel, faithful found among the faithless, unmindful of the scorn and anger of his brethren, and with generous impulse, apprehending with Jesus the truth that lies round the heart of things, answered him, 'Well, Master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God, and there is none other but he ; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.' In the long and chequered history of the Church of Rome as a papal and sovereign institution, we do not often meet with such 'scribes.' I do not mean in the *writings*, or in the important daily ministrations of the village *curé*, but in the *political life* of the Church. Nor are there in the pages of the Roman

Baronius and the Protestant Milman many notable instances, throughout the periods of which they treat, of the head of the Church preferring the weightier matters of judgment and the love of God, to the tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin. The notable instances of pope or council proclaiming a 'good life to be better than an orthodox profession,' are few and far between. Nay, rather,

Rem facias, rem,

Si possis, recte ; si non, quocunque modo rem.

Persecution of heretics, ostentatious humiliation of rebellious sons, anathemas for those who should attempt to deprive the Church of its dues—whether of ceremonial or ecclesiastical dues or authority—such was the undeviating rule of policy till restoration and reparation were made. But pardon for offences against the moral law could be bought for a price. For instance, the voice of the Church was seldom heard proclaiming itself against any powerful baron, duke, or prince to the following effect : 'You have enriched the Church with lands, and fields, and doweries ; you have built noble cathedrals and priories ; by burning, stripes, and bonds, you have strengthened her hands against the heretic and infidel ; you have been faithful to your religious observances of rites and ceremonies ; you have been a pilgrim to the Holy Sepulchre, or a leader of armies in the crusade against the Saracens ; you have been an obedient son, giving honour to your spiritual mother and to the vicar of

God upon earth ; but in your family relations you have been a treacherous son, an unfaithful husband, a careless and cruel father ; as a prince, you have sold justice, you have ground down the poor of your people, you have not lifted the heavy yoke of your nobles ; your hands are full of blood, and your heart of lust. By virtue of the power committed unto me, and in the name of the Most Holy, I excommunicate you and deprive you of the joys of life here and the hope of immortality hereafter.' On the other hand, the following is no untrue representation of the spirit of much of the dealing of the Church with adversaries who, by position or genius, or energy, had made themselves too powerful to be disregarded : ' You have acted independently of the injunctions and precepts of the Church ; you have not fulfilled her ordinances ; you have not proved obedient to her admonitions ; you have held tenets that she has pronounced heretical, and you have not retracted them under pressure of either warning or persuasion ; you have set the authority of your conscience against her infallible utterances, your common sense against the heavenly wisdom of her councils and synods ; therefore, though in private life your conduct has been excellent, prudent, and kindly ; though in public life you have shown yourself a wise and vigorous ruler, a defender of justice, a lover of peace, a furtherer of the interests of trade ; though you have restrained the fierce tyranny of the powerful, and your people love

you and honour you, I, by virtue of the power committed unto me, and in the name of the Most Holy, excommunicate you, and shut you out from the joys of that world which is the inheritance of the faithful.'

I have enforced the antithesis as far as possible in these imaginary instances. Of course, in real life, Rome endeavoured to satisfy the cravings of men's hearts for natural justice, and to suppress the risings of popular indignation, by salving over the iniquities of a man's private and public life in the one case, and by insinuating evil motives and deeds in the other ; so that the antithesis did not *appear* as striking as it really was or might be ; but in the *spirit* of her secular rule, it was always felt that there was need of one thing, and that was ecclesiastical supremacy. This grievous error in the Church of Rome has been here insisted upon in no spirit of animosity against the Church, but because it affords a pre-eminently signal example. But the same error is to be found in all other churches, among the followers of Calvin, the Lutherans, the Churches of Scotland, the Church of England, the various bodies of Dissenters. In words they agree that the object of the true creed is to live the right life, in practice they point out the necessity of the creed, sometimes quite ignoring the godly life, sometimes (shutting their eyes to the plainest facts) denying the possibility of an excellent life without the creed. And yet the excellency of the strength of the teaching of Christ was, that he did not look to the creed but to

the life, and that he refused to give his disciples a creed but he gave them a life, even his own.¹ Not blood of bulls and goats, not ordinances of Jewish or other churches, not sacraments, not the sabbath, not the Bible, but his indwelling Spirit. Not traditional authority; not the fathers of old times, not the stereotyped voice of any church or synod, not premeditation on the correct formula of speech, but his Spirit to teach the right thing at each moment.

The sale of indulgences was a gross instance of this gross error on the part of the Church of Rome, and is no longer possible in the monstrous form it assumed in the pagan days of Leo X. ; but even now, the doctrine of extreme unction retains a dangerous and vicious hold on the imagination of the Church. It is not the life only, it may be the idle words of a creed that are to save the dying man. The same spirit is manifested in the law of the Church of England which, inheriting the traditionary custom and teaching of the Church of Rome, forbids burial in consecrated ground to suicides, unbaptised, and excommunicated. Surely a singularly incongruous collection of offenders to be brought together for the last act of ecclesiastical judgment to be passed on their dead bodies. First, suicides! That is the rash, and weak. The destroyers of self rather than the destroyers of others. The unfortunate, whose brains are frequently en-

¹ I mean by his living. I do not mean merely by his death, which was the necessary outcome of his life.

feebled, or worse, and who (even if their brains be not diseased) may in one violent moment, and under the sudden pressure of cruel reverses and disappointed hopes, wreck themselves, and undo the whole work of their lifetime. Reckless and miserable, but offended against rather than offenders. Then, unbaptised ! Something, perhaps, might be advanced in favour of denial of consecrated burial to the fathers and mothers who carelessly neglected, or wantonly refused to baptise their children. But what of the children ? What have these lambs done ? Not here to defend those who might consider infant baptism (or any baptism) either an error or a crime ; what of the ignorant, or of those bound by the authority of the parent ? To refuse the last rite of church communion to the unbaptised is wrong ; to refuse it to *all*, without regard to explanatory circumstances, is wrong, unwise, absurd, and cruel. Lastly, the excommunicated ! That is, the notoriously impenitent and heretical ! those sometimes who have offended merely against the edicts and practices of the Church. Those, it may be, whose only fault is that they have dared to have opinions of their own, and have firmly held to them. A punishment for the wrong *opinion*, not the evil life.¹

Such is the incongruous array of offenders whom ecclesiastical vengeance suffereth not to be buried in the grave of their forefathers. Incongruous not only for the singular and arbitrary choice of ecclesiastical

¹ For some further remarks on this subject, see p. 186.

offence—not only for the selection and the omission, but still more singular because the duty to one's neighbour on which (in good half at least) hang all the Law and the Prophets, has received recognition in such a haphazard sort of way. One could conceive a consistent course whereby the last rites of Christian communion should be forbidden to the enemies of the human race ; that the world should wholly break connection with those whose hands had been raised against it. There might be some cause to show for utterly rejecting even the dead body of the king who loved war and oppression rather than peace, of the priest who fed his flock with lies and unrealities ; or of the notorious ill-liver, the adulterer, the habitual drunkard, the beater of wives and slayer of children, the cold-blooded speculator who plunges his defenceless brothers with their wives and children into a gulf of ruin whence often he escapes scot-free. The 'godly discipline' so much desiderated in the Communion Service would gladly have punished these ; and indeed there is a sturdy rectitude and simplicity about the process that extorts a certain admiration, but it is sufficient to observe that such a godly discipline does not exist in the present constitution of the working world.

I will only point out, further, that similar remarks may be extended to most other forms of dogmatic religious belief. The foolish deed of Nadab and Abihu, the gainsaying of Core, seem to have been rather directed against Moses' authority than in antagonism

to any living truths. The Calvinist burnt the heretic, and Knox persecuted the unbeliever, with as much zeal as his Papist opponent. Some Baptist sects refuse the holy communion to those who would consent to communicate with any but themselves. The 'Bible Christians' (usually known as the Plymouth Brethren) deny salvation to all who cannot accept their phrases. As the Romanist raises the cry of 'The Church, the Church,' so the Protestant raises the cry of 'The Bible, the Bible,' and amid the voices of innumerable bickerings the voice of the Lord is hardly heard in the quiet of the soul demanding 'The Life.'

We have come to this, that the object of right opinion is a right life, and that most Churches, grasping at the shadow, and letting go the substance, have striven for the right opinion and not sufficiently considered the right life. The Churches are a means to an end. They have frequently forgotten that they are *only* the means, and, living for themselves, have lived for the means, and not attained the end in any worthy manner. *How* important right opinion is we have not yet considered, but *without* a right life we have agreed that the opinion is worthless. So far as the Churches have failed in their noble mission, they have failed because they have not recognised this. And, indeed, it seems probable that a great cause of our want of success in missionary enterprise is due to this lack of spiritual appreciation. It would doubtless be the missionary's wisest policy to discover and sympa-

thise with the good in the religion he deprecates, and to relegate to the background many of the differential dogmas of the Christian religion, which are interesting theologically and may be entirely true, but which are hardly necessary for the object in view, which is to urge the claims of a pure, generous, and just life. Might not the seeds of the Gospel be better planted, and bear more vigorous fruit, by magnifying the points in common, and reducing the peculiarities to the smallest amount? Might not a prayer from the Vedas take its place side by side with 'The Lord's prayer'?

If it be conceded that the object of a religious creed is the spiritual life, those religious truths will be pronounced most essential which best conduce to a spiritual life. And thus we are led to ask the question, What are the essential truths of religion?

Some will say, The belief in the Trinity, that Christ is God, and so on, throughout the orthodox chapter.

But while, on the one hand, it is open to very considerable doubt whether such doctrines are especially conducive to a spiritual life, there can be no doubt at all that our test of universal acceptance does not apply to them to any great extent, and that they do not fall under the terms of the primary general axiom 6. On the other hand, those religious propositions of which our test does take cognisance will generally be considered to conduce most surely to right living, and will also (as we shall see immediately)

fall under the terms of the religious axioms 2, 3, 4, and 5.

To apply our test, then:—Those propositions must be considered essential which are found in common in the sacred books of the Jews (the Old Testament and the Apocrypha), the Christians (the New Testament principally), the Mahomedans, the Brahmans, the Buddhists, the Chinese, the Persians, the Parsees, and in the mythologies and philosophies of the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, and others.¹ Those propositions must be considered non-essential which are confined to one or to only a few of them.

The essential will seem to be certain moral and

¹ I have already referred to the Buddhists as not recognising a god in any correspondence with the Western apprehension of the word, or immortality accompanied by individual consciousness or activity. This is a great difficulty, only partially met by the theory of continuous transmigrations. But, on the other hand, the moral, and, generally speaking, the spiritual aspect of Buddhism leaves but little to be desired. For the error, destined to bear lasting and grievous fruit, that Gautama committed of establishing orders of male and female mendicants as the keystone of his organised system, was rather an error in political economy than in morals. There is another great difficulty of an exactly opposite nature in considering the theory of religion the Greeks framed for themselves. They retained the belief in 'God the Father' which Gautama rejected, and they certainly looked forward to a life after death in which the spirits of men should live a life consonant to their life on earth—a completely different conception to that of Nirvana, and only bearing a fanciful resemblance to that of the transmigration of souls regulated in strict accordance with the doctrine of Karma (or 'doing'). Moreover they worshipped the gods with reverence and gratitude as the beneficent givers of health, and of the spirit of beauty and wisdom; but of notions of personal morality, righteousness, or holiness, common to Semitic races, and to their brethren of the Aryan races, they only exhibited faint and accidental traces.

theological propositions, the non-essential will be found to be the historical and the ecclesiastical. On the debateable ground between them will lie one or two theological propositions, and the underlying principle of sacerdotalism. The overwhelming importance of the moral propositions, which we gather from a comparison of religions, might have been concluded (as we have observed above) from the *a priori* consideration that as the object of religion is right living, the important propositions of religion will be moral propositions.

The essential *moral* propositions (cf. Religious Axioms 3 and 4) will be found to be that some actions are right and some are wrong, and that we cannot escape our responsibilities.

The essential *theological* propositions (cf. Religious Axioms 2 and 5) are that a good God is the Moral Governor and Father of the Universe, and that He will bless us now and hereafter with a blessing pressed down and running over if we do His will, and will be alienated from us if we reject Him.

No purely ecclesiastical or historical dogma can be considered an essential proposition. Whether it be true or not that Christ is God, the proposition is only valuable for those who have formed a worthy conception of Christ's character and work. It cannot be considered a necessary dogma for those who doubt the existence of Christ in any tangible fashion, or who by birth or country have never had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with his

name or his work. Similarly the assertion that Mahomet is the Prophet of God is only a form of words to those who have not studied the life and work of Mahomet. It is a different matter with the sayings and doings attributed to Mahomet and to Jesus. These we can judge of.

The underlying sacerdotal principle is a more difficult matter. It seems necessary for man to have a mediator between himself and God. The father stands in the place of God to the child. Job cries out for a 'daysman' between himself and God. Jesus is 'The Great High Priest.' He 'becomes sin' for us. He 'bears our sins' on the cross. He is 'the advocate' with the Father. He 'sits on the right hand of God.' He comes 'to judge the world.' He 'makes an atonement' for the sins of the world. In Jesus' own words, 'The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many.' These are the technical or theological expressions of the New Testament. Similar technicalities abound in all religions.¹ I do not desire to explain the meaning

¹ Some of the theological technicalities of the Hindoo religion bear a remarkable resemblance to those of the Christian religion, though probably only that which it is the custom to call accidental. There are doctrines of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of birth from a pure Virgin, and others. Out of Gautama, the Romanist missionaries, struck with so many Christian traits, made a Saint of the Church. This, perhaps, is hardly surprising, but there is no reason to postulate any communication of ideas. The similarity of the theological dogmas will be better explained by reference to the common humanity of Hindoo and Christian, and to the necessity equally felt of supplying common requirements.

of the above technicalities, nor to say here how far I believe them to be true. But I do say (at the risk of being misunderstood), that if the principle of sacerdotalism consists in the necessity of a mediator or of mediation between God and man, the principle is a true one, and essential to spiritual life. And I would put it into words thus :

An essential element of spiritual life is work for others and sacrifice of self for others. And to this I will only add : If Jesus taught this by his work and precepts and life more fully, more simply, more consistently, more *naturally*, than any other of God's good servants and teachers before or since (and it must be remembered that to set the example is a far greater work than to follow it), then Jesus is worthy to be called the Son of God, as his special name, and to be our Master and Elder Brother.

If, however, sacerdotalism means more than this in its elementary conception, it would seem to be a delusion and an imposture ; in other words, a dangerous and ensnaring lie ; the parent of superstition, of slavery, and of unfilial relationship of man to the Father.

But by those who look deeper below the surface of things than sacerdotalism, as ordinarily apprehended, can ever reach, a more powerful appeal may be made. It may be said : 'What is the value of life without religion, and what religion is worth the name but Christianity, and what is the meaning of Christianity

without the distinctive formulas of Christianity? What would have become of Europe without the renovating influence of the Son of God, and what should we individually be worth without the stay and strength of Jesus?

‘We are willing to grant that the belief in the Fatherhood of God is the primal and essential element of religious life. But who but Jesus gave us that belief in any worthy manner; who preserves for us that belief, so as to be a salting influence for the civilised world, but Jesus?—Jesus, partly by his words, but principally by the organic lesson of his life and death. It is easy to disparage, or deny with chilling criticism, the work of Christ; but that work is already done in part, and is manifest to all who have ears to hear, or eyes to see, and cannot be undone. It is as if a man standing on a platform were to kick down the ladder by which he had ascended, or to deny that there ever had been a ladder. Christ is such a ladder. Our present highest platform of spiritual life is due to him. To deny him is to ignore the ladder by which we have ascended, and to be oblivious of the plainest facts of history.

‘But if Jesus is thus really the renovator of the world, how are we to clothe this great fact in fitting language? If he really thus taught us the Fatherhood of God, and thus has become for many of us the source and origin of the best spiritual life, is he not really the Son of God? And if in the New Testa-

ment, which tells us of the Son of God, we also learn of his sinless life and of his oneness with God, and if furthermore we are directly told that Christ is God, how shall we dare withhold this wondrous and living truth from the people? Shall we not be verily guilty?’

To which I answer: First, I have not said, and, God forbid I should say, a word against the vivifying and energetic work of Christianity, or against the work and life of Jesus the Son of God, and the Creator of the Christian sentiment. Nor, indeed, is there here any denial that Christ is God. Secondly, partly at the risk of repeating what has been said before, Christianity is worthy of such high honour among all the religions of the world, not because it has taught us that Christ is God, but because it has given us the bequest of the fulness of his life, and because it teaches us more consistently and more perfectly than any other religion those elementary truths on which all the excellence of all religion consists; but, last, and in most sober seriousness and sadness, I add:

If it could be shown, as I am sure it is true, that much of the orthodox conception of Christ's life and teaching is supremely false, of what value is the dogma that Christ is God? If thaumaturgical follies and idle sophistries are attributed to Christ—and, if through the convenient formula that Christ is God, to God—is not the formula likely to prove pernicious?

If the character of Christ and his Sonship to God is misapprehended in its very fibre and tissue, and if the result of this misapprehension is to exhibit God as a gigantic juggler throwing dust into the eyes of his creatures, and palming off two injustices to make one justice ; pronouncing himself alienated and far from everyone of us ; requiring to be satisfied, like a bloody idol, with human sacrifice, perhaps the less that is heard, just for the present, of the dogma that Christ is God, unless ennobled by a more worthy conception of its real meaning, and the more humbly our teachers set themselves, as students, to examine, *ab initio*, Jesus as he was, before they presume to teach what he is, the better for the moral and spiritual health of Christendom.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NON-ESSENTIAL IN RELIGION. UNION NOT UNITY.

‘WHAT is the result arrived at?’ I think I hear it said. ‘You have proved nothing, you have shown nothing. You talk of establishing facts, and axioms, and propositions; but the result is less than meagre, it is microscopic. You say that in science we attain the greatest amount of certitude; but you do not encourage assurance when you explain that of the best established laws and results we can only say that they are as certain as anything can be. You lay down no canons of art. It is true you indicate certain lines of common sense, by attention to which we might arrive at satisfactory canons of art, but you do not yourself venture on any conclusions. You seem to have no fixed opinions on any one subject. You certainly manage to formulate a few elementary principles of a general nature, and of a special religious nature, principles which are as old as the hills, and of which no one could doubt the truth; but you do not certify us of their truth; you only call them

“axioms.” But all this might be forgiven you, if on the one thing which really does interest us deeply, you would speak out. You tell us nothing that we ought to believe in religious matters. The world of troubled opinion is as a raging sea, without a bottom or a shore. We long for certainty. We are earnestly seeking to find a rock whose foundations are sure, to which we may moor our frail bark, rather than to manifold floating and sinking islands, and your rock is as stable as the Hindoo’s world “supported on a cow’s horns, the cow on a mountain, the mountain on a tortoise, and the tortoise on God knows what.” It seems like hideous mockery. Such is not the course of our religious teachers. They give us a concrete body of doctrine, compact, and dovetailed. They invite us into a fortress in which we may stand secure from the machinations of those that are without. They are ready to solve our doubts. They are willing to demonstrate all things, or else to explain that they are “mysteries.” This key of the “mysteries” will fit all wards. There are, however, two or three little difficulties. When we have listened to our religious teachers, we do not feel convinced. When they have spoken, our doubts are not removed. Their mysteries often offend our judgment and sense of congruity, and sometimes wound our consciences. Moreover, they differ greatly, and on very vital points, among themselves; and, indeed, they are not always self-consistent. If, then, you are the new apostle with the

new gospel, give it us, that we may rejoice in your glad tidings.'

Some such argument I feel might be urged by a reader who has got thus far, not grievously wearied or grievously vexed. Some such argument I would like to meet.

Doubtless, I have many fixed opinions on many subjects. But who am I that I should ventilate them? What I think is a matter of small importance. Nor, indeed, if I had worthy opinions, is this the place to air them. By so doing, I should enter into discussion and controversy, and I desire to avoid these. This treatise is attempting to separate truth from opinion, and to show how small is the domain of known truths, how idle it is to dogmatise, or to profess to be anything but a student. It would be worse than arrogant, it would be an artistic blunder, to attempt a work which George Eliot's Mr. Casaubon himself could not accomplish.

If such simple and elementary truths as I have attempted to enforce are not rocks in the troubled sea of mere opinion, possessed of harbours of defence against the stormy winds, I do not know what rocks are to be looked for, or, if looked for, found. The truths mentioned in my treatise may be denied, but what others are to be put in their place?

As for the third point in the indictment, that religious teachers profess to quell doubts, and to promulgate exact formulas of belief, and that such are

not to be found here, I answer in deep humility, but with a strong sense that it is extremely important to speak out.

It does not appear to me that there is too much doubt in the realm of religious thought, but too little. It appears to me that we are strangled and intoxicated with too much certainty, or rather with a false appearance of certainty. We know so many things that we do not know. We believe so many things that it is respectable to believe. It appears to me that as it is most honest to preserve towards the unknown the attitude of doubt, so it is extremely salutary. Not *doubt* necessarily, but the *attitude* of doubt implying inquiry. *Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.* So you may drive away doubts, and chain them out of sight, and drug them into dullness, but they will return with redoubled persistence. And then they will drive you to the madness of revolt against common sense, or morality, or both ; or will reduce you to the stupefied condition of unreasoning orthodoxy. I would urge that it is better to welcome doubts in a friendly spirit, to look them fairly in the face, not to fear them ; and the mountain will frequently turn out to be a mole-hill. And even if the doubt prove too strong, surely a serious error, calamitous as that is, is better than a pretence of belief—is better than that hypocrisy which alone Jesus condemned with unmeasured condemnation. The mind of man is so constituted, that it is very easily swayed

by authority. For hundreds of years medical students saw an orifice in the septum of the heart, because Galen said there was one. They not only saw it, but they demonstrated the necessity of its existence. So also many phases of orthodoxy are, or may be, the orifice in the septum.

Agnosticism is a word much used of late years. Are we, then, all to become agnostics—know-nothings? Is that a laudable ambition? Nay. It is certainly *good* to know, and to hold fast what we know. But when we do not know, it is well to suspend the judgment, and not to be afraid to say I do not know. It is not *disgraceful* not to know.

I have somewhere spoken of the average sermons of our clergy and dissenting preachers in a disparaging manner, implying that they were trash. I know that I shall be told that I can expect nothing else, when one man has to preach a hundred sermons a year on one subject, and it will be asserted that he cannot avoid offering trite observations and being guilty of endless iterations. But I confess this does not seem to me a sufficient explanation. We do not weary of the Psalms, which we know by heart. The well-known passages of Old and New Testament are instinct with ever-renewed life. The prayers of the Prayer-book are ever fresh. The terse sharp prohibitions of the Commandments with respect to foundation virtues do not pall. But this minister of God's word, this messenger of good news, with the book of human

nature, of history, of states-craft, of noble lives of God's saints and heroes before him, with everything to move his enthusiasm, from the sea of upturned faces of his brethren—the children of the common Father—below him, to the innumerable company of holy angels above him ; this man, who has professed to feel and to obey the call of ministration—his set work in the pulpit is so often absolutely worthless. Yet he is an educated gentleman, above the average of his congregation, and better read than most of them, with rich funds from many sources to draw upon, with which they have not had time to make acquaintance ; able to hold his own, and more, in conversation in the street or in the drawing-room on the general topics of the day ; why, when he performs his own special work, is it done so badly, so uselessly ? Three answers may be returned : First, he has not been trained to preach, he has not trained himself to preach (perhaps he rather despises the 'art'), and he does not know how to set about the training. The text-book of Good Preaching has not yet been written. Next, he cannot be contradicted or set right in the pulpit. In conversation the corrective influence of opposition keeps his intelligence active. But in the Sunday service it has not been found expedient to revive the godly custom of the primitive church, whereby those who had an exhortation spoke in due order. And lastly, the point pertinent to the present enquiry. He does not give his spiritual faculty fair play. He has

conceived it to be his duty to uphold certain creeds, and forms of words, and Church ordinances. He does not welcome honest doubt, he treats it (alas!) as an instigation of the devil, as snares and stumbling-blocks of the enemy, instead of as a stimulus of God, as it truly is. He speaks more of right opinion than right living. He unduly and unnaturally restricts his choice of topics to a narrow compass, and that not one of great importance or general interest.

Finally, then, in answer to the indictment with which I have commenced this chapter. It is true I have asserted that our elementary religious knowledge is exceedingly restricted; but it would appear to be sufficient, and to be important to the last degree. This knowledge, if it covers but little ground, is essential, and it supplies a solid foundation. And now we will go further afield.

The *object* of religion is right living, and the *essentials* in religion are those beliefs without which right living is impossible.

The large mass of theological dogma, and of ecclesiastical ordinance is, then, of the nature of non-essentials. Are, then, the non-essentials of no importance, and is it a matter of indifference what a man believes? By no means. Much is matter of very high importance. A mature and well-developed spiritual life is only possible when combined with matured and deeply held religious convictions; when combined with sincerity, simplicity, earnestness of faith,

steadiness and vigorousness of action. Truth is one and indivisible. It is important, as far as possible, to know what is true. The excellence of life depends on true opinions, and those who hold false opinions are so far stunted and dwarfed in their growth, deformed, and enfeebled.

If, then, truth is one and indivisible, and is so important, shall we strive after unity?

The answer, *a priori*, might be, yes. We are, however, met by two insurmountable difficulties. The universal history of the world has proved incontrovertibly that unity has never been attained; and that a partially successful attempt after unity means, or at least is frequently followed by, spiritual stagnation or death.

Shall we, then, relapse into indifferentism or latitudinarianism? The answer is, By no means. The admission of the gods of the conquered nations into the Roman Pantheon evinced a coarse cynicism that was the outcome of a dull spiritual vitality. It was not charity. It was policy partly (policy as regards the conquered people, and policy towards 'the unknown God'), and partly, Gallio cared for none of these things. It is a strong and steady religious conviction that ennobles and confirms life.

What must we do, then?

The answer is that we must strive, not after unity, but union. The word 'heresy' is a disagreeable word by association, and 'sect' and 'schism' still

more disagreeable, implying division. We will not, therefore, employ those words ; but I will say, the thing to be striven after is to establish and nurture schools of religious opinion, co-existing in peace and amity, and founded on the common essentials ; and to enjoin and practise sympathy ; and to abjure violence, anger, and seclusiveness.

For observe ; as we are constituted, unity means stillness, inaction, death. Union means motion, vitality, growth, progress, assimilation. Union means provoking one another to good works, godly emulation, noble ambition, eager-heartedness. A tree with its branches and twigs is more beautiful and beneficial than a dry straight stick.

‘But truth is one and indivisible, and only one of these schools can be right. All the others must be wrong.’

The answer is, that not one of the schools is altogether right, and not one of the schools is altogether wrong. Founded, as they are, on the common essentials, the elements of truth are in all of them. To say that they exist, is to say, that they hold a truth, or truths. For though truth is one and indivisible, truth is (as we have already remarked) many-sided, and the best school may find something to learn from the weakest. Moreover, who can say which is the right school ? We are driven back to that difficulty again and again. For a man, as a member of a school, to say, ‘I hold the whole truth, and nothing but the

truth,' is to leave himself no cloak for his ignorance. For a man to say, 'That school, different from my school, is wrong in all those points in which it differs from my school,' is to shut his ears to the universal throb of the deep heart of life, to deny that there are

Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

It is to forget the words of the Apostle, 'If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.'

For observe once more. The grafts of different apples on one stock are not at unity with one another, but at union with one another. They represent union springing out of unity. They have the common essentials; the common root in the ground, the common air and sunshine, the common rain. But the fruit is different, the apples are different; the apples are not equally good, but they are all apples. There are none so bad that they are not good for some purpose. There is no one so good, but that some special good will not be found in another. The fact that each graft flourishes, and bears apples, is a sign that the common sap comes through the stock from the root. If one of the branches were broken off and joined on again by any but a natural process, however fair and flourishing it might appear, it would speedily *die*, and cease to be an apple graft.

This may be compared with religious life. The common essentials are a belief in a loving and wise

Father, and a belief in and lively sense of the duties of one man to another and of a man to himself. They are expressed in the Golden Rule of Christ. The non-essentials are as the different grafts of the one apple-tree ; they are the schools of opinion, which should be at union, springing out of unity.

I may sum up the present results with Baxter's apothegm. Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, charity in all things.

Will the reader excuse me, and exercise a little of this charity, if I illustrate with a fable ?

A polypus, suffering under a fit of severe indigestion, at odds with the world and himself, thus soliloquised :—' It is a strange world, and strange are the creatures in it. When I consider myself, I am often lost in astonishment at my unnecessary ungainliness. No purpose in the endless motion of my sprawling limbs ; or rather, cross purposes. Not one of my arms is aware what its neighbour arm is about. The consequence is, much restlessness, hesitation, uncertainty ; also many pains, cramps, and disorders of my extremities. How well it were to cut off a few or all of these excrescences, and thus to reduce myself to unity with myself, if indeed I am one and not many. I should then know my own mind, and pursue a single purpose.' No sooner said than done. With exceeding pain, exertion, and self-mutilation, with the aid of sharp flints and edges of rocks, the polypus rid himself of his encumbrances, and found himself, if

not *teres*, yet *rotundus*—a heart, a stomach, a nervous nucleus—all the essentials of life. But, unfortunately, for want of food, and the elements of motive power, the miserable creature died.

‘We have agreed, then, that we are to be satisfied with—it seems even to hail and be grateful for—union ; shall we not at least attempt to draw the bonds of union as close as possible ?’

The answer is, Certainly, by all means. Proselytise, persuade, be instant and urgent. Only beware of three things. First, do not cast your pearls before swine. Secondly, do not boggle about less important matters, while there is a difference of opinion about more important matters. Do not strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Thirdly, do not forget that your ignorance is great, your knowledge is small. If you are clever, you are but as a child picking up shells on the shores of eternity. If you are not clever—There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy. Things are not always what they seem.

Let us consider these points rather more at full.

My first point is, ‘Do not cast pearls before swine.’ That is, do not try to persuade a man across the grain. It is well known that while it is difficult to chop wood across the grain, it is an easy task if you take the wood according to the law of its growth and natural development. You may be armed with the invincible hatchet of truth. Your opponent may be

as the helpless block before you. Consider him as he is, not as he should be, and deal with him according to the law of his being. Take as the stand-point of argument and persuasion between him and you, not the points of difference, but the points of agreement and sympathy; and work from *them*. Put yourself in his place, and measure things from his point of view. See things with his eyes, and identify yourself as far as possible with him. You will find in him a curve of elastic vitality, due to previous character and moulding. Pursue him along that elastic curve, not trying to break but to alter the direction of his forces without dissolving the continuity of his existence. Do not speak to him at all on matters on which you are 'diametrically opposed.' The time may come, will come, when you will understand one another better, and find that the vast difference between you has now either vanished or reduced itself to a difference of little importance. To sum up in the Apostle's words, 'Become all things to all men, that you may gain all.' Thus you will become a fisher of men. And you will find that the 'swine' are men like yourself.

My second point is, 'Do not strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.' Observe a due proportion in the importance of things.

Thus things emotional, questions of tender conscience and noble life, are more important than things intellectual, technical, and theological. The in-

tellectual requires the leisure and cultivation of a life time. The technical is ambiguous, and liable to be misunderstood. The theological is apt to assume a fictitious importance. Let us consider instances.

The second Nicene Council adopted the dictum of a certain Greek Abbot, that it was a more venial sin to frequent every brothel in Constantinople than to cease to worship the Mother of God in similitude. Here was a strong and painful instance of a very common error. To worship before the picture of the Virgin Mary was an ecclesiastical injunction, to live chastely is a natural and moral injunction. The Abbot said, Better a good profession than a good life. He had no idea of the fitness of things. He confounded the means with the end—namely, right living.¹

I have already remarked on the fact, that by church law our consecrated church-yards are forbidden to suicides, excommunicated, and unbaptised. I only recur to it here because it is a case in point; or, perhaps I should say, it has been a case in point; for I suppose there is no doubt, that if the ecclesiastical law of burial were to be amended without reference to, or knowledge of, past enactments, the new selection of offences sufficiently heinous to deprive the offender of the last rites of church communion

¹ I do not conceive the objection would be raised that this is not a fair instance because the worship of the Virgin Mary is idolatrous. But to avoid all possibility of doubtfulness, let us substitute for the worship of the Virgin Mary, offering prayers to God in the name of Jesus Christ. Similar remarks will apply.

would not include any one of the present category, and would take some cognisance of the claims of good sense and consistency.

I take from the 'Athanasian Creed' the following propositions :—

'Whosoever will be saved, *before all things* it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith, except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.'

Later on it continues :—

'Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The Creed finishes :—

'This is the Catholic faith, which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

'Glory be to the Father,' &c.

Now I have no desire here to say a word against the truth of the paragraphs of this creed. Granting that each paragraph is true; the reasonable and natural objection is, that it is not of the slightest use or importance to the ordinary Christian. The man of leisure and literary ease may study it with interest and advantage, without plunging head over ears beneath the 'substance' and the 'incomprehensible,' and the Three in One and One in Three, the 'making,' the 'creating,' the 'begetting,' the 'procession,' the 'dividing,' the distinction between 'the Christian verity' and 'the Catholic religion,' and so on. The logician

may find infinite delight and satisfaction in this nice parcelling out and exact weighing of the Godhead with the scales of human judgment. The 'advanced Christian' who is tired of 'sincere milk,' fit for babes in Christ, and who is hungering after 'strong meat,' suited to a robust constitution, can here feast himself in abundance. But the wayfaring man, who, though a fool, is not to err in the way that God's love and wisdom has set up, will know at once that 'it is not for the likes of him, but for the gentlefolks.'

If, then, the creed is true, it is not of the slightest importance, and should be handed over to the ecclesiologist. If it is untrue, it should be handed over to the antiquarians, as a curious and interesting relic of the past.

But, whether true or false, *it is not true that these things are necessary to everlasting salvation*, but quite the reverse.¹

¹ I know I shall be told that in making an attack, though it has been a very cautious and partial one, on the Athanasian Creed, I am slaying the slain and entering upon an idle and thankless task. I can hardly consent to this view of the case. While slavery was still an institution in British Colonies, it would hardly have been an argument with Wilberforce or Clarkson to cease their exertions on behalf of oppressed and cruelly treated negroes, that the subject had been threshed bare. They would have said 'Nay, but the institution remains. We have the arguments on our side, and we will have fact and law as well.' Perhaps it is comparing great things with small. In the matter of the Athanasian Creed the 'slain' are in the inconvenient attitude of men standing in battle-array with arms in their hands. Either the orthodox religious leaders are convinced by the arguments addressed to them, or not. If they *are* convinced, why do they not give the Athanasian Creed decent burial, or at least cease to

The error is, as before, the want of appreciation of the proportion of things—straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. And hereafter I wish to show the disastrous result of this error, *the disastrous practical result* in the present state of Christendom.

To advance the argument, it will be convenient to put forward two theoretical propositions:—

‘If you do not live an honest life, you will go to hell.’

‘If you only think of saving your soul, you are living a life of gross selfishness, and are fit for little but stripes and correction, and your spiritual education is yet to begin.’

Here again, I do not wish to argue how far these propositions are true or false. All I wish to say is that (unlike the Athanasian Creed) they are *important*. They go (at least the second does; and the first may do, if the word ‘hell’ is rightly understood to imply alienation from God and the servants of God) to the groundwork of *conduct*. It is well that two men who disagree on such subjects should attempt to come to an agreement, or to reduce their difference to the

read it in the ears of the people on high-days—cease to read words of condemnation and division notably on Christmas Day, the day of peace on earth and good will towards men, and on Whitsunday, the day of celebration of the mission of the Comforter? If they are *not* convinced, then it is not a case of slaying the slain. To my mind this subject is too full of painful interest to be merely met with a cynical shrug of the shoulders, or with good-tempered ridicule at the follies of the clergy.

smallest possible amount. There is no straining at a gnat here.

My third point was that our knowledge is very limited—that it is well to be humble in judgment, and to remember that things are not always what they seem.

It will not be necessary to dwell on this point. To return for one moment to the Athanasian Creed, it may be remarked here, that in it the want of humility of judgment, and the pride of scholastic speculation and hair-splitting, are painfully evident. I feel sure it would be well for us to talk less of our knowledge of God, and to recognise our ignorance. But this in itself is matter for a complete treatise, and must not here be entered upon.

The true union that exists between many schools of opinion is frequently concealed by a sacred verbiage and a technical phraseology, which is often little more than a ‘shut, sesame!’ The men of Gilead and the men of Ephraim fought to the death, with the bitter hatred of domestic and fraternal discord; and the only way they could distinguish themselves from one another was by the words Shibboleth and Sibboleth. A dog and a man are not alike. Yet, at an early stage, the embryos of dog and man cannot be distinguished from one another. A hairy monkey is not like a naked man. Yet the human foetus is covered with hair, all but the soles of the feet. In the embryos of many dissimilar things we

get unity, and this should teach us charity, toleration, sympathy.

Sympathy, not only with our 'neighbours,' but also with those 'that are without,' with those 'that are far off,' with 'the whole world that lieth in wickedness.' Not only should the various schools of Protestants live in amity one with another, but also with Romanists, the Greek Church, Mohammedans, Hindoos, Buddhists, and others.¹ The antipathy and latent repulsion that are so often felt are due to the fact, that the natural kinship is undeveloped, and they frequently proceed from simple thoughtlessness and ignorance. Paley prefaces his 'Evidences of Christianity' with the words : 'I desire that, in judging of Christianity, it may be remembered that the question lies between this religion and none ; for, if the Christian religion be not credible, no one, with whom we have to do, will support the pretensions of any other.' It is a little doubtful what is meant by the 'credibility of the Christian religion,' and the 'support' to be refused to other religions ; but so far as the passage institutes a comparison between Christianity and other religions, no doubt all 'with whom we have to do,' even 'infidels,' will assent to the *substantial* truth of the quotation. And yet 'infidels' will feel, and many who are not infidels will agree with them, that the sentiment ex-

¹ It is not intended to imply that Christians should not freely recognise error (even gross error) in other religious systems, or that they should not attempt to 'convert' Mohammedans and others.

pressed is a very narrow and one-sided truth, and may easily be made the parent of error. This world is God's, and the number of Christians (so called) in it is small. And it would not have been inconsistent with the character of the kindly author of 'Natural Theology' if he had acknowledged with warm-hearted gratitude, the common elements of God's teaching and revelation (of Him who giveth wisdom to *all men* liberally, if they feel their need of it, and ask it of Him) and the common inspiration of God's servants in all religions; even if he had also found it necessary to offer an apology for the multi-coloured and straggling religions included under one name Christianity, and to explain what he meant by the word Christianity, whose evidences he intended to enunciate.

Indeed, if the question were asked, 'Is Christianity the best of all religions, and, if so, in what way?' I should feel inclined to answer:—Christianity is the best of all religions, not because the nobler sentiments of Christianity are not to be also found in other religions; not because ignoble sentiments cannot be found degrading Christianity just as ignoble sentiments degrade other religions, but principally because Christianity has approved itself a religion of progress, because it contains the seeds of vitality, which have enabled it to withstand the grossest corruptions, and to rise out of the ashes of its deadness to renewed life. There is some bottom of sense in the scanda-

lous tale of the Jew, who was converted on going to Rome, saying, 'That religion must be a true and miraculous religion which can keep itself existent with such abominations at its heart and head.'

Other religions have not shown this vitality, or not to the same extent. Mohammedanism, in its early enthusiasm, was a nobler religion than the miserable superstition called Christianity which it replaced, full of forms of words and priestly incantations. But Mohammedanism is now a stagnant religion, gasping for existence, and only waking up now and then with a fierce and feverish flickering of the old flame. The furnace is there, the ashes of the fires; but there is no great draught of the reviving breath of inspiration, no fresh fuel of proselytes, no worlds to conquer, no eager hearts to desire to conquer worlds. And while the original life blood has slowly ceased to flow, the original corruptions of gloom, and voluptuousness, and thirst of dominion and oppression have tainted more and more the corpse-like frame Mohammedanism is ready to perish.

Brahmanism has shown a longer vitality, a greater ebb and flow, but it too is now effete. Who shall say, without power of recovery?

Buddhism was originally a far nobler religion than either of these. It has had a nobler history. Its founder was a greater man. But from the very beginning there was cold at the heart's core. That could not remain (or would not seem capable of

remaining) a popular religion, *i.e.* a religion for the people, whose final reward of merit was, grossly conceived, annihilation ; more spiritually conceived, a re-absorption into the divine essence, where individuality and personality were lost. Still it must be remembered that Buddhism has counted its millions where Christianity has counted its thousands ; that Buddhism is a more ancient religion than Christianity. On the other hand, Christianity is a proselytising religion, which Buddhism has ceased to be ; and Christianity is a religion, not only of past civilisations, as Buddhism is, but also of modern civilisations, which Buddhism is not.

The *other* distinctive feature of the Christian religion, which has enabled it to survive so many rude shocks both from within and without, seems to me to consist in Jesus being the Son of Man. The 'incarnations' of Hindoo gods are merely a faint and unsubstantial shadow of this great elementary truth. Jesus' incarnation and the Hindoo incarnations both point to the love and solicitude of God for man, and the necessity of redemption ; but Jesus calling himself the Son of Man points to something far more distinctive, and far less easy for man to realise. He remains for us the great ideal and example. His life strengthens ours by making us believe in the possibilities and nobilities of humanity ; we aim at a higher standard of growth ; we the less easily fall into the deadness of despair. We are bound more one to another by being bound to him. If Jesus was perfect, so may

we be. If Jesus found good in other lost creatures, so may we. The adulteress need no longer cry 'I am alone.' We need no longer feel cut off from the publican and sinner. There is good in all men, God's stamp on all men. There are none lost. While there is life, there is hope. We are a brotherhood.

With much that is faulty in the Christian religion I find this vital truth. And I do not find it, or find it only hazily expressed, in other historical religions. It is this truth that is at the bottom of 'the Religion of Humanity,' in so many ways, as it appears to me, illogical and unsubstantial. And hereby the truth has been brought home to our minds and hearts that our only conceptions of God can be attained through our knowledge of man. And it is the Son of Man who has taught us, in a natural way, and by natural processes, to look for God in the possibilities and perfectibilities of the Ideal of Humanity.

To sum up. The thing to be aimed at is not orthodoxy, not agnosticism, not latitudinarianism, not (necessarily) Christianity, but (hated word) eclecticism, which implies schools of opinion.

In other words, the thing to be aimed at is the worship of a Father in heaven and on earth, the belief in His good and wise and orderly providence and guidance, the cultivation of the gracious fruits of such worship and belief, namely, the obedience, trust, reverence, and love of sons to Our Father, and the sense of kinship to one another.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION.

WE have agreed that a spiritual life may be built on the essentials of religion alone. *Without* them it can in no real sense be called a spiritual life at all. A man *must* have some idea of love, trust, and duty to Him who is higher than himself, and of love, trust, and duty to his neighbour. On these elements a *real* spiritual life can be built. But with *only* these, it will certainly be a poor and barren life, and perhaps, a low and mean one. Over the bones must come the flesh :—

Lo ! God's likeness, the ground plan,
Neither painted, glazed, nor framed.

To the dull prose of necessary communication of material ideas must succeed the argumentative phase of philosophy, the verisimilitudes of fiction, the warmth and glow of poetry. To depth must be added breadth. The non-essentials must enter in to give body and colour to a man's religious conviction. To illustrate by analogy, it may be said that every man is required to paint his own picture, having

been given common brushes and common paints. The more necessary paints are labelled infinite trust, bright hope, large sympathy and charity, earnest endeavour, resentment, and wisdom or common sense ; and the ground colour must be sincerity. There will be many other paints. In each picture the laws of composition and proportion should be observed. Pictures painted with these paints will be noble, though not equally noble ; they will be in accord with the laws of painting, though not alike. Such is the spiritual life and the religious conviction of each individual. Let it be added, to carry the analogy a little further, that every man is bound to paint *some* picture, and that every man is bound *not to copy* from his neighbour's picture. Hints may be taken and may be given freely, but he himself must paint his own picture.

What I want to insist on here, as the principal practical summary of my treatise, is that every man must have a spiritual life, and that the life must be a life founded on his own individuality, and not an attempt at an exact copy of his neighbour's, be that neighbour who he will, be he greater and better in all ways than himself. In England it is a fact amply acknowledged on all sides, and deeply lamented by nearly every party, that dogmatic Christianity does not retain the hold it should, or even the hold it did, on the people. Two great classes will have little or nothing to say to the Church of England or any of the numerous schools of opinion called 'sects.' One

class consists of the literary, the philosophical, the intellectual, and the thoughtful, who relapse in many cases into amused indifference, or scornful silence, or pained scepticism ; or they attempt to find a rest from their uneasy sense of insecurity and uncertainty in the absolute utterances and the dignified authority of Rome, unmoved by the questionings of conscience and the busy enquiries of active brains. Others, influenced by ancestral and hereditary instincts, for the sake of their families—their wife, children, and dependants—in response to the claims of respectability, retain the old formulas, the lip-service, the Sunday observances, the outward demeanour of talk and walk, but their heart is otherwise. ‘*Ἡ γλῶσσ’ ὁμώμοχ’, ἡ δὲ φρήν ἀνώμοτος.*’

This is all very bad. This habit of unscrupulous assertion, this imitative life, this respectable hypocrisy, this conformity to outward appearances, is not noble ; it is slavish. It will hardly be considered in accordance with Christ’s teaching, who did not treat the Pharisees gently that made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but who *did* deal gently with the lost and degraded, that were *sincere*, whose outside, however unclean, corresponded with the inside. What Christ seems to have desired was a solid foundation, the real man at bottom. Still, it may be answered, that the intellectual and thoughtful are but a small class, however important. It also may be answered, that they are well able to take care of themselves.

Granted that, *on their own stand-ground*, the intellectual and the thoughtful are neither self-sacrificing nor heroic, it is not of so great importance if the foundations of modern Christianity are built deep on the broad popular basis. The pence of the millions amount to more than the pounds of the 'upper ten thousand.' The masses in the long run will rectify the balance, and enforce the right.

This brings us to the consideration of our *second class*. It is very certain that the 'lower classes,' the artisans and 'hands' of our towns, unrestrained by the conventions of society, live without any dogmatic Christianity—it would almost seem, at first sight, without God—in the world. They are surely 'hands,' but are they 'hearts'? As the 'public opinion' of their neighbours does not accuse them, so also they are but little influenced by the best thought of the best men of the age. It reaches neither their heart, nor their understanding, nor their conduct. For instance, trades-unionism is good. But many of the laws of trades-unionism are (patently) ignorant, unwise, and unjust. But of this more particularly hereafter.

That the 'lower classes' should be estranged is a very serious matter. Whose fault is it? Would Christ, if he were a man on earth again, as once in Jewish lands, take the lower classes to his heart as he did the publicans and harlots; the lower classes, which reckon among them so many kickers of wives, besotters of themselves at public-houses,

panderers to the most brutal passions of men ; or would he spurn them, as faithless to the light of the great truths he had taught them ? Would he again reject, with his historic withering contempt, the ‘upper classes,’ the educated and the teachers, likening them to the Pharisees of old, as those who held the keys of heaven, but neither entered in themselves nor suffered those who were entering in ; or would he say, ‘Come, ye blessed faithful few, who are within the pale, who have kept the dogmatic teaching I delivered unto you’ ?

Let us briefly and roughly contrast the opposite poles of opinion ; the opinion of the man who ‘does not believe in religion,’ and the opinion of the man who is unable to accept any but the most orthodox and strait-laced views with regard to a Christian profession. Then let us interpose the *tertium quid* ; the opinion which steers clear of extremes and hopeth all things.

The first opinion, coarsely expressed, is as follows :—

The Bible is not a safe and good guide—far less the best guide, or the only guide. Christianity is an effete religion, drivelling in its dotage ; idle and vain, like all other religions. All dogma is absurd, and should be relegated to schoolmen and ‘dunces.’

The second opinion may be expressed thus :—

The Bible is the revealed Word of God, unfolding to us His plan of salvation for sinners. Every word is

true, nor can it be added to nor taken from. It explains to us God's dealings with man, and makes known to us the attributes of His Godhead. Thereby we learn the blessed doctrine of the Trinity, and the high mystery of the double nature of Christ, God in man, Eternal Son of God, one with God, and God himself; also the mystic procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. It is necessary to our everlasting salvation to understand and believe these great truths, and also to believe that no man can be saved but by Christ alone, who came from heaven to save sinners, to be the Mediator between us and a justly angered Father, and to satisfy the offended justice of God, by offering himself, an innocent sacrifice, for a guilty world. Therewith follow the doctrines of justification by faith, sanctification, foreknowledge, predestination, the natural depravity of the human heart owing to the original sin of Adam at the 'fall,' the error of trusting to 'works,' and so on.

The enunciator of the *tertium quid* may be supposed to express himself as follows :—

'Christianity is a noble and a manly religion in its elements, and it seems a grievous blunder—indeed, it seems a serious indictment against our good sense and better wisdom—that Christianity should be thought only good enough for women and children—for priests who are, many of them, only quasi-women; and for the feeble-minded, who are often called old women. Is Christianity so vain and

emasculated a religion that the robust, coarse manliness of the working-man, and the refined, stately manliness of the intellectual and thoughtful, cannot find a home and shelter under its broad wings?

‘Now no religion worth the name is possible without dogma. No doubt the letter killeth and the spirit maketh alive. No doubt the “letter,” which our religious teachers are so tenacious about, without the spirit is dead. But no doubt also the spirit without the letter is too ethereal to be of much value. The spirit is the important part, but it must be clothed with the letter. Few of us feel able to acquire any adequate idea of the soul without the body, and none of us care for the body without the soul. As, therefore, it is manifest there is need of religion, so the religion must express itself in definite dogma.

‘No book is so worthy to be called “The Book” as the Bible. No other book of sacred instruction is so excellent and noble *on the whole*; neither of later books, whose inspiration has been derived chiefly from the Bible, nor of books whose inspiration has been from quite different sources. No book is so worthy to be the guide and companion—the *vade-mecum*—of the working classes, as the Bible “without comment.” And this is none the less true because the Bible is really no book at all, but a collection of works of different authors of various times, of different modes of thought, of various merit and value, of various and incompatible conclusions, and of such

separate estimates and conceptions of religious life as are embodied in the Old and New Testament (as if we were to bind Shakespeare and Bacon together, and call the compilation "The Philosophy"). Nor is the result much less adequate because the compilers of the canon seem to have exercised a doubtful discretion in excluding from the Old Testament the later Book of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, from which the Essenes and more spiritual teachers of the Jews extracted much of their purest and most convincing doctrine; and in including the unauthentic soothsayings of Daniel.

'Christianity must be acknowledged by all to be a noble, a vital, and a progressive religion: a religion that must not die; a religion that will not die yet awhile in spite of a few vigorous onslaughts of its enemies, and the still more dangerous advocacy of many of its friends. And in a comparison of Christianity with other religions the point may be put thus:—Just as the sacred books of the Hebrews are well styled "The Bible," or "The Book;" just as Jesus of Nazareth is rightly called "The Son of God," so Christianity may be denominated "The Religion of Life;" not excluding other sacred books, not excluding other sons of God, and not excluding other religions of life.'

Let us grant (what will not be denied by many) that this *tertium quid* represents, not *all* that can be said for Christianity, but what *must* be conceded, and

the very least that can be conceded to Christianity. Acknowledging the estrangement of the 'lower classes,' let us grant the just claims of the Bible and of a dogmatic Christianity, and their exceeding importance to the people, and consider what is the cause of the estrangement, and on whom the blame lies.

It is frequently stated that the educated classes and the working classes have lapsed into practical infidelity. My answer is, that it is not so. I turn the tables, and say that our religious leaders and teachers have lapsed into practical infidelity, that the working classes have found this out, and are waiting for the faithful priest or true prophet to come who shall present to them the sincere milk of God's Good News. I say that the working classes feel the hollowness and unreality of the Gospel presented to them, and that, in a blind way, with many grievous mistakes and mole-like upheavals, their trades-union tenets and their communism is an attempt to work out a Gospel for themselves. I say that our religious leaders and teachers have mistaken the shadow for the substance, the means for the end, the accidental for the essential, the ecclesiastical for the moral, the indifferent for the important, the musty *débris* of past ages, the rotten scaffolding of pretentious support, the modern upholstery of external effect for the solid building. And this I call practical infidelity; whereas I call the confused struggling of the masses after light a labour before birth.

As this is a very serious indictment, I will endeavour to justify it by appeal to facts.

The demonstration that 'Jesus is God' is a subject well worth the attention of the theologian ; but of what value is it to the man who doubts whether there is a God at all, whether there is an ultimate court of justice, and mercy, and sympathy ; who asks bitterly whether Christianity is worth having at all in any way ? Bread is good for the healthy man, and beef-tea is unnecessary. But for the man stretched on the bed of weakness and sickness, or for the feverish patient, bread is absolute poison, and beef-tea must be administered. It is not that bread is bad, but it is bad for the patient. A spiritual teacher must observe a proportion in things, else he will do mischief where he tells nothing but truth, and means nothing but good. Food must be palatable and digestible. Indigestible food is poison. And one man's meat is another man's poison.

It is of no use for men who are inclined to throw the Bible over altogether, who never read it, who believe that it is a foolish book full of lying miracles and old wives' fables, who approach it beforehand in a captious spirit and with a feeling of animosity, who accept and acknowledge the good fruits of Christianity without perceiving that they are the work of an organic religion developing, growing, and energetic ; it is of no use to tell such men that every word of the Bible is true. If it were a true statement, there is a time for all things, and the right time must be waited

for. But they will know that it is false, and will mistrust the teacher who asserts its truth. They will discredit the statement at once in a thousand instances. They will point to the difficulties surrounding the story of the Creation, to the descent of all men from one pair, to the account of the 'Fall' in the Garden of Eden, to Noah's Ark ; to the commendation of the smooth-faced, calculating, and stipulating hypocrite Jacob ; to the miracle of Joshua's staying the course of the sun and moon, to the fact that the sun does *not* go round the earth ; to God's recommending Samuel to tell a lie, to the fact that a lie is not forbidden in the Decalogue ; to the particular foretellings of future events which characterise the prophet Daniel ; to certain discrepancies in the New Testament, to Jesus being born of a pure Virgin, to some of his miracles, to his bodily resurrection, and so forth.

This is of course not meant as an exhaustive list of the objections that will be offered to the statement that every word in the Bible is true. Nor is it meant that these objections are all valid or even reasonable. They are chosen because they are of a varied character, and because they will be held strongly and urged effectively. And unless the mind of the pupil is convinced that his objections are unreasonable, or invalid, or at least doubtful, the audacity, and indeed the absurdity, of reiterating that every word in the Bible is true will be felt with redoubled force. The character of both book and teacher will suffer ; their reputation

and influence will be diminished, if not wholly destroyed.

Nor will it answer for the spiritual teacher to say that, as the Bible is not a book of science, but a book of religious teaching, it is the moral and religious doctrines in the Bible that are true. Many of the above objections will be urged against this. James will be set in antagonism with Paul, the discordance between the doctrines of free-will and predestination will be pointed out, the difficulty of conceiving Jesus to be God will be insisted on, and so forth. The opponent will take his stand on a single text, and from this vantage ground, as from an invulnerable fortress, he will prove incontestably, if not to his teacher, at least to himself, that all the doctrines of the Bible are *not* true.

Whereby result many grievous consequences. The Bible being made to depend on each separate text, falls in many cases altogether into disrepute. The teacher is considered a hypocrite and a humbug. The man is thrown back on his own unaided resources, and carves out a religion for himself. And though a noble religion may be carved out without Christ in it, it must have some similar foundation and only a noble man can carve out such a religion. Whereas ordinary men are not noble men ; whereas, also, noble men would not abandon the living realities of Christianity.

But may not reverence for the book, and resulting reverence for the teacher as an exponent of the book,

be fostered by an altogether different teaching? As thus :—

‘ Every word of the Bible is not true, either in fact or in doctrine. Many statements in the Bible are untrue; many doctrines false, misleading, and dangerous. You must judge for yourself, but judge with humility, submission, cordiality. You go to your best friend for advice, not because your best friend always gives good advice, but because he generally gives good advice, always gives sober advice, and because in many cases where at first you have thought him mistaken you have afterwards proved him sensible and true. If I say that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, should be your best friend, your companion, your guide, and your *vade-mecum*, I mean that I know no other book which gives such good and wholesome advice and comfort. It is almost never extravagant. You will find in it a sober and earnest way of looking at life and the affairs of life. It is essentially a book of righteousness and providence, also of gladness and good news. It is a good thing to know and feel that God is your Father. The life of Jesus is such as you would like to live yourself, and to see your neighbour live. There is a warmth and glow about it that must come home to your heart. Tell me anything you know that is better, sweeter, more humane and human?

‘ If you are troubled with difficulties, so are others; your teachers as well as you. If the Bible seems to speak falsely in any place, do not throw aside the

whole book for one fault. Perhaps the Bible is wrong. Perhaps you are wrong; and a wider experience, a deeper knowledge, and a greater reverence, will teach you so before long. But never think to understand the lessons of the Bible from one text. That is misleading, and worse than useless. The general teaching of the Bible must be learnt by comparison.' (Here an explanation of *oriental imagery*, phrases, customs, and manners, difficult words, hyperbole and metaphor, may be given.)

'If you had only the Bible to guide you, you might often go wrong; but you have the open book of nature, with much of God's teaching, love, and providence written upon it. Here you will generally see beauty, brightness, happiness, and cheerfulness. You have also two other books—the book of history, and the book of men's lives about you; these must be studied as well as the Bible, and be compared with it. So you will correct many of your false notions.

'You may observe that the history of the world will teach you that one of God's natural laws is progress. It is one of His most beautiful laws, and seems necessary to healthy life. The same vital law of progress is evident in the Bible. Compare Abraham with Moses; Moses with David in the Psalms, the more spiritual Prophets, and the Book of Wisdom; and these with the sayings and life of Christ, and the epistles of the Apostles. Do you not perceive that if the early notions of God attributed to Him many

actions we should think evil and derogatory, those early notions are always being corrected, and refined, and beautified, and glorified?' (Many examples should be given.) 'This is what we should expect and hope for. Try to trace for yourself this law of progress. And remember, when the Bible leaves us, progress does not leave us. It is still going on, and we are learning many things the early Christian did not clearly see.

'Remember that the prophets were not so much those who foretold future events as those who proclaimed the will of God to the people, as to things past and present, no less than as to things future. Isaiah, for instance, dwelt so much on the future because, in a time of great depression of his people, nationally, morally, and spiritually, he trusted in God, and in a glorious future—in a restitution of all things in God's own way. He believed in the coming Messiah, and he preached a coming Messiah, and he was right. So you, too, in the deepest gloom, may, if you choose, become a prophet. You, too, if you are faithful and trustful, may know that God fulfils himself in many ways—that for you and your fellows, as you sing and pray, there is a good time coming. So will you, too, be a preacher of future good, as Isaiah was, and so will you, too, be right.

'If such glorious hopes, such noble truths, such rich promises, be not sufficient for you, I do not know what will be. Miracles are idle for you.

Powers of foretelling future events will not help you. And nature will turn a deaf ear to your entreaties.

‘But if these truths are sufficient for you, do you not think that this book, notwithstanding many faults and discrepancies, and difficulties, and doubtful doctrines, may well be called the Word of God ; just as holy and good men and women, who have made mistakes, and done deeds, and said words, and thought thoughts, that they have repented of—as David, and St. Peter, and St. Bernard, and George Fox, and Elizabeth Fry—are rightly called the servants and saints of God ?

‘Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. If you feel a hatred for the folly and sin you commit ; if you feel your lower life to be poor and petty ; if you feel a hunger for righteousness ; if your soul expands with the glories of beauty and truth ; if you feel the need of a Father in heaven, and a Brother on earth ; if you wish to lead a pure life, and to do noble deeds for your fellow-men ; if you wish God the Father to take you to his bosom when you die ; if you long for the company of the Holy Ones of God, who fulfil his works in the life to come ; if your heart is moved with love and trust and reverence, joy and hope, you will love the Bible, and you will hail its noble doctrines.

‘But if you are anxious for a certain paltry thing which is called “ saving your soul ; ” if, in other words, you wish to escape the punishment of hell, go to

the priest. He will have a nostrum for you. But no word of salvation has been committed to me on these matters. On the other hand, a sentence of doom rings in my ears, and cries aloud in the deep of my heart, "He that will save his soul shall lose it."

'Nay, I tell you, life hath richer blessings in store. As a matter of fact, a religious man is sometimes a bad man. But, granting he is innocent and harmless, innocence is barren, like the white-robed Essenes, who abstained from marriage and the joys of social life. Love is prolific; trust is as the preserving and savour-giving salt; joy and enthusiasm are assimilative and creative; working for others is the very life of lives for yourself.'

I think some simple teaching of this sort, preached long and earnestly from a few thousand pulpits and reading-desks, in the open air and in the domestic circle, would not only conciliate the intellectual classes and convince them of the good sense and sincerity of our religious teachers; not only work a wondrous change in the tone of suspicion of the lower classes; but would be a great gain to the spiritual power of the whole nation. Such sermons, however, are few and far between.

In a similar fashion the different details of true religious doctrine might be treated, an attempt being made in all cases to point out the *naturalness* of the doctrine, the simplicity, the usefulness, the moral bearing. The doctrine of the Atonement might thus be re-

conciled with the ordinary dictates of man's justice and with common sense, and would become a living reality. Christ the Mediator might cease to be a *Deus ex machina*. The healing miracles of Jesus might become a source of conviction and comfort ; signs to those that believe, not portents. The gross immorality of the ordinary notion of hell-fire might be exposed without (necessarily) denying the possibility of total and final alienation from God. Selfishness might be rebuked (spiritual or material) ; sympathy, charity, and the forgiving faculty strengthened ; resentment might be guided and controlled ; cruelty, slander, and malice checked ; a higher ideal pointed out as possible ; a more bright and cheerful aspect imparted to life generally ; and, as the last and latest outgrowth of all this, purity of life, restraint of passion, sobriety of appetite, and evenness of temper, be nurtured to better purpose than now seems possible.

This course would probably not at once succeed in bringing back the alienated flock of God—the sheep that have no shepherd. It is a question whether our religious teachers, even if they would abandon their favourite Chinese puzzles and chess problems, are able to decipher the signs of the times, and solve the real problems of the day with judgment, discretion, and sympathy. It is a matter of doubt whether such moral questions as hang on the words reverence, chastity, forgiveness of sins, imputation of righteousness, resentment, justice, and mercy bearing one

another's sins, toleration, sincerity, punishment, and penalty, can be grasped by them in any tolerable fashion. This is not surprising in men who have hitherto, as a class, held up the telescope to the blind eye. It is also doubtful how far they have realised the idea implied in the word 'congregation.' Until the laity are far more an integral part of the Church government, as in the early Churches—as, for instance, with all its faults, in the Church of Corinth—it is not easy to anticipate much progress or much closer union of earnest with earnest. This subject is a large one, and is as much a matter of practical detail as of principle; all I say here is that the clergy are the ministers of the people, and are simply an idle institution without the people. With ecclesiastical matters shelved, with moral matters well and rightly taught, with the laity properly consulted, surely some dreams might become noon-day realities.

Dreams not likely at present to be realised! There would be a greater chance of their realisation if our religious teachers and leaders would prefer the points of harmony to the points of difference, and remember that the aim of religion is right conduct. If only apostolic succession and sacramental observances, and baptismal regeneration, and trinitarian subtleties, and church ordinances, and orthodoxy, and infallibility, and auricular confession, could cease to occupy so large a space in their thoughts and in their spoken utterances. If only they would remember that to

the working man, the business man, the 'gentleman,' and the ordinary professional man, these things are matters of little import—are ashes to a dry mouth, fear to a trembling heart, trouble to a scrupulous conscience, scorn to the scornful, mistrust to the mistrustful, shame and confusion of face to the thoughtful, and an unfitting offering (I dare say no more) to offer to the Father of the spirits of men.

I will only urge these remarks further on two points—the question of creeds, and the question of the immediate future—trades-unionism, communism, and cosmopolitanism.

First, then, for creeds.

There was a time when our ancient creeds had a living power. Towards the end of the fourth century, we are told by St. Augustine, in his 'Confessions,' there was living at Rome an illustrious citizen named Victorinus. He was held in such high esteem by his countrymen as a man of letters, a philosopher, a rhetorician, an upholder of the worship of the gods, a leader of the Senate, and a magistrate, that they awarded him during his lifetime the signal honour of a statue in the Forum. This man, in his old age, was moved to quit the religion of his fathers, and to join the Christian Church. The form of admission at that time was to read the confession of faith from a conspicuous platform in the presence of the assembled Church. It was a trying ceremony for the old man

to throw off his exasperated and powerful friends and relatives, to abjure the religion of his youth, under which the young republic of Rome had become the imperial mistress of the world, to proclaim to the wondering, the sneering, and the haughty, his adhesion to this new contemptible religion of slaves, and freedmen, and aliens, to abandon '*Romanus sum*' for '*Christianus sum*.' Here met together all that was galling to his pride and self-love, and all that was wounding to his childhood's affection and reverence. The heads of the Church thought this cruel publicity would prove too great a burden for the new convert to bear, and offered him a private confession of faith. But he waived them impatiently off. 'No,' said he, 'if I should fear to confess Christ before men, I should be denied of him before the holy angels.' We see him pass up the hushed and crowded church full of friends, and enemies, and idle lookers on, to the appointed place, and amid subdued cries and whispers of 'Victorinus! Victorinus! it is he! it is he!' he reads that same creed which ten thousand of us now repeat Sunday after Sunday. How full of thrilling meaning—how instinctive with life; what depth of inner sense in the new words, now gray with age and use! Each word had its shaft, each phrase had its freshly-written history. It was not a time for a dissection of the arguing brain—for a weighing and balancing of the cold and critical judgment; it was a time for the impulsive acceptance of the heart, the

unquestioning adherence of the emotions. He who took hold of the creed took hold of life.

Is this so now? Is anything like this true? *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.* New times, new circumstances, new judgments, new emotions, the possession of larger experiences and of more important truths require new measures and new instruments of working. The creeds no longer answer their purpose. They are, to all intents, dead. They cumber the ground. This is because much that was once accepted without inquiry, or disputation, or suspicion, is now found to be imperfect and untrue. *True*, if you will. But a creed, to be worth anything, must embody that which is *willingly* accepted to be true, after the closest inquiry. A 'creed' must be 'believed.' And again, much that was once important, or seemed important, is now no longer considered a matter of importance, or has lost its original importance. Creeds must grow and expand like all other living elements. The creed of to-day will not satisfy the needs of to-morrow, even if it remains true, and is accepted as true. And lastly, it is now felt that much which was once apprehended, or thought to be apprehended, was founded on an unscientific basis, and an imperfect appreciation and knowledge of facts.

Let us consider the three creeds of the Church of England in this light. First, take the Athanasian Creed. With the exception of the two or three

phrases that it has in common with the two other creeds, there is only one paragraph that is worthy of the attention of the sober and thoughtful of the present day, and even this one paragraph is open to exception. It is as follows :

‘And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.’

This is doubtless *important* enough, now and always, for all men. It is easy to understand. At least it satisfies the *a priori* thirst for justice. The only question is, is it true? If not wholly true, how far true? Doubtless—doubtless, it is *important* enough. But it is the only important information, at least in the present generation, vouchsafed us throughout the entire creed. The rest, when not worse, is lumber.

Now let us take the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds, in each case printing in italics those portions which are (1) untrue, or believed by many to be untrue, or (2) now felt to be unimportant, or (3) ambiguous and misleading, and hard to understand ; *i.e.* things useless or disputable.

THE APOSTOLIC CREED.

I believe in God the Father *Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth* :

And in Jesus Christ his *only* Son, our Lord, *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried, He des-*

cended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; *The Communion of Saints*, The Forgiveness of Sins; The Resurrection *of the body*, And the life everlasting.

Several phrases have disappeared. Of those which are left, one might easily dispense with 'Born of Mary, suffered under Pilate . . . I believe in the Holy Ghost.' All that would be left would be: 'I believe in God the Father, And in Jesus Christ His Son our Lord, Who was crucified, dead, and buried; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church; The Forgiveness of Sins; The Resurrection; And the life everlasting.'

With regard to the phrases and words italicised, the following observations occur.

The statement that God is 'Almighty' requires a definition of 'almightiness.' This difficulty has already been mentioned.

Some people believe in the eternity of matter; and this would imply that God is not the 'Maker of Heaven and earth.' But the point does not seem sufficiently valuable to be insisted on in a creed, even if true.

The statement that 'Jesus was conceived of the

Holy Ghost,' if received in a spiritual, metaphorical, and mystic sense, doubtless contains an element of noble truth. But the acceptation of it literally is surrounded with very grave difficulties, and the historic or documentary evidence in support of it is not only slight and inefficient, but untrustworthy.

The statement that Jesus was 'born of the *Virgin Mary*' is open to far more damaging criticism. The documentary evidence is as unsubstantial and untrustworthy as in the previous phrase, with the serious addition that some such argument as follows will be earnestly urged against it. 'The statement does not contain an element of truth or nobility. It is incredible, because it is so contrary to the observed order of nature, that its possibility cannot be admitted even in one unique instance. We do not believe it in any other attested instance of previous or later date. And if it be said that the event was a miraculous one, it must be remembered that as, in the natural world, a certain order and coherence is observed between cause and effect, so, in the world of supernatural and miraculous events, we are to expect a certain proportion and coherence between cause and effect. And this proportion and coherence we fail to perceive; nay, rather, we are painfully struck with a misconception of spiritual things so serious as to give rise to this gross and materialistic notion. For, surely, the statement can hardly seem to be a noble one, when we remember that God declares marriage (elevated to be a

sacrament of the Roman Church) to be a natural and blessed ordinance. It is derogatory to a worthy belief in the Son of God, who was also, above all other men, Son of Man, obedient to the laws of this world—to the natural laws, which are the laws of God. And further, the origin of this strange and unnatural conception can be traced partly to a misunderstanding of the metaphorical language of an Old Testament writer, and partly to a misguided sense of the fitness of things. Many times in the history of the world, and among different races, has a portentous birth been ascribed to great religious or earthly heroes and demi-gods, either by themselves, or by their enthusiastic worshippers and admirers. “*Datur hæc venia antiquitati,*” writes Livy, apologising for his narration of the marvels surrounding the early history of Rome, “*ut, miscendo divina humanis, primordia urbium augustiora faciat,*” and a similar remark is here applicable. To sum up, the statement is false. But if true, it is not of sufficient importance to be embodied in a short creed. And even if true and important, it is a serious stumbling-block to many thoughtful men.’ Such objections, seriously maintained, almost demand the excision of the phrase from a universal creed.

‘He descended into hell.’ What is meant by ‘hell’? If ‘Hades,’ substitute it for ‘Hell.’ And, again, if ‘Hades,’ what is meant by ‘Hades’? And again, is it true that Jesus descended into Hades?

And, if true, is it a matter of great importance that the people should believe it ?

‘The Communion of Saints’ is a phrase that conveys but little meaning to the people. It is an ‘unknown tongue,’ and against the utterance may be pronounced the cautious rebuke of St. Paul to the Corinthian Church with regard to the ‘gift’ of ‘speaking with tongues.’ The object is to edify the Church, not to speak into the air. It is better to speak five words with the understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. How can the unlearned take part in the act of social service if he does not understand what is said ? If, then, the unknown tongue is used, let there be an interpretation. If there be no interpreter, do not use the unknown tongue.

‘The resurrection of the body.’ This, in its *literal* acceptation, is an absurd formula of belief. When sublimated and refined, there is a philosophical sense in which it may be held to be possibly true. But hypotheses and possibilities should not find their way into a creed. Not even mere probabilities. Nor is it a matter of vital importance. With regard to the resurrection of the soul, on the question of the rising of Jesus from the dead, of his ascension into heaven, and of his sitting at the right hand of God the Father, hereafter to judge the world ; on these questions hang all the hopes and aspirations of Christendom, and, indeed, of humanity. But to talk of the resurrection of the body, even if it be in any way a correct repre-

sentation of facts, is to us, in our ignorance, little more than an idle form of words.

The Nicene Creed may be discussed in a similar manner. But it will be unnecessary. I will merely write it down with italicised portions, as before.

I believe in one God, the Father *Almighty*, Maker of heaven and earth, *And of all things visible and invisible :*

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, *the only begotten* Son of God, *Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father ; By whom all things were made, Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man, And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead : Whose kingdom shall have no end.*

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, *The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets.* And I believe in one *Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,* And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come.

It is sufficiently evident that, in both creeds, the omissions are considerable.¹ I have, however, the

¹ One may just observe, in passing, on the phrase 'Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,' that the historic quarrel founded on these words, which was played out with such fierceness and bitterness, and which lasted through so many decades, finally to cause the absolute separation and estrangement of the Eastern and Western Churches, affords a signal instance of an error as common, or nearly as common,

further and more serious objection to offer to these creeds that there is very little attempt in either of them to make room for, certainly no attempt to give prominence to, the *important* doctrines of Christianity, and indeed of religion at all. Nearly all is theology. There is very little about right living. Much is inserted that is important about the non-essentials, hardly a word about the essentials. When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. Such themes never grow old. Out of them creeds may be framed for evermore, for all classes of society and civilisation. Educated men and the lower classes alike are awe-struck and attentive when the claims of righteousness and temperance, and the responsibilities of the judgment to come are earnestly put before them. St. Paul, before the Pharisees and Sadducees was polemical, ecclesiastical, and theological. 'I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,' said he, with the political view of dividing his enemies. But before Felix, when the earnest desire of his heart was that all his hearers should be altogether as he was, save his bonds, he uttered a creed that was full of meaning for others besides Pharisees.

Is there not room for a simple, more life-giving,

now as then of forgetting the legal maxim '*De minimis non curat lex.*' The result of this quarrel was particularly disastrous, and it may be presumed that our orthodox leaders in these days would not approve of the policy then pursued by the two parties striving for supremacy; but the same spirit is manifest now, and in the same quarters.

and natural creed, to supersede these dried specimens, once vital with thought and feeling? '*Quid faciam Romæ?*' said the pagan satirist, feeling that life at Rome was no longer possible for an honest man, and that if life in any worthy manner was to be lived at all, Rome must be departed from. But is it necessary that the Christian moralist should take this miserable cloak of despair to himself, and abandon religion altogether rather than submit to its inanities, and hypocrisies, and falsehoods? May he not take a part in working a reformation which Juvenal despaired of, as he settled himself into the attitude of fierce and cynical opposition to his neighbour whom he shouldered in the street? Shall Juvenal, finding falsity in the very nature of the human heart, and looking on life as a spectator sees the drama on the stage, in which he takes no part himself; or Pliny, finding the best gift of life to be the power to destroy one's life; or Jesus, finding good in the Samaritan, and acknowledging the light of God to be resident in every man, however degraded—which shall be our example? But if the Christian religion is not to be a religion of progress and expansion, if the new wine—the ever new wine—is to be preserved in old bottles, of a surety the wine will be spilled, and we shall relapse into pagan pessimism. The bottles are bottles. No one cares for them. It is the wine that is to be desired. It is the *sense*, not the *words* of a creed, that is valuable. As a religion in its noble course en-

larges its boundaries and the limits of its vision, so must its creeds. It is a mistake, and a terrible one, not to say a crime, that these venerable creeds (like the old man of oriental fable) should cling round the free limbs of Christianity, dwarfing it and paralysing it. What means this worse than pagan *renaissance*, now spreading over Christendom, which substitutes atheism and finality for a Father and eternal life, but that the formulas of the Christian religion (not to say of each separate religion), are found insufficient for the needs of humanity? Not of the *élite* only, but of the many. Has religion really failed, or is it the letter that *killeth*?

As, then, it would seem to be neither irreverent nor audacious to attempt to burst from the cramping bonds of ancient and stereotyped forms which kill, I venture to submit the following creed, with just two words. I assert that each clause is true, important, and easy to be understood—that no important clause has been left out (for a creed)—that the orthodox, the intellectual, and the people, would alike assent to the truth, importance, and simplicity of every clause.

I believe in God the Father, all-wise and all-loving, Up-holder of the Universe, Moulder and Fashioner of all good things, visible and invisible.

I believe that He has put His goodness into the hearts of all men, giving love and wisdom freely to all who desire and love them; and, especially, that He has, at many times in the history of the world, inspired with the spirit of His love and wisdom the souls of divers of His servants to proclaim truth,

to disperse error, and to be examples of holy life ; and, above all, I believe that He gave a glorious message of truth and life to His son Jesus, to be a Saviour, and Master, and Brother, to whosoever will ; who, with others, the blessed Apostles and Saints of God, sits at His right hand and will come to judge the world. And they who have a desire to fulfil God's will shall live in His presence for evermore, and they who do not love His will and work shall be banished from His presence,

And I believe that His providence guides and directs the world so that the law of His Godhead is impressed upon it as a law of progress and life.

With such plain, simple, religious teaching as this ; with such homely beliefs, that knit all that is best in the family and national life of man, into kinship with the fatherhood of God, the true priest of God, the faithful servant of the people, will find that he can appeal to the hearts of the lower classes. Thus will he draw them, and they will learn of him. Thus they will take a new lease of higher life. The natural world will clothe itself with brighter hues ; the spiritual world will glow with visions of truth, justice, light, warmth. If they know they have a Father, they will desire to obey him and to cling to him as sons. Hope in the future will give them strength to bear the ills of the present, and a will to do their work well and worthily. The Bible will no longer be a closed book to them, but the book of righteousness, the revealed will of God. Such blessings of hope and trustfulness will the true man of God bring to the people, if he will but lay aside certain pretentious theological dogmas which, however true and import-

ant, are at the present moment a sore burden ; and if he will teach them that religion was made for man, not man for religion.

One thing more he must do. The working men of all civilised countries are now asking bold questions, and striving, roughly and blindly, to find the solution to difficult problems with an earnestness and a resoluteness hitherto unknown. They will follow, if any man will lead them boldly and well, and with hearty and comprehensive sympathy. They will follow if he lead them ill, so long as he is bold and sympathising. It is a great crisis in the history of the world. The hour has struck, but where is the man ? He who desires to be a leader of the people must make up his mind what is the real lesson of communism and trades-unionism. These sentiments will not be crushed. What is the noble element in them ? How are they to be guided ?

The essential element of communism is the equality (with qualifications) of men, and the brotherhood of the human race. Its more important developments are very largely Christian, and date from the earliest Christian times. It will be worth while to consider this somewhat in detail.

The early Christian Church at Jerusalem, if not elsewhere, under the direct guidance of the Apostles (carrying out the tenets and practice of Jesus with his followers, who had one 'bag' between them), had all

things in common. This early and literal exemplification of the spiritual formula, 'the communion of the Saints,' probably did not last long. From the beginning there are indications that the plan did not work smoothly. And no doubt, as the Churches grew in number, and importance, and complexity, as their first simplicity slowly dissolved in view of a more extensive horizon of life, and work, and usefulness, the constitution of Christian society had to be altered, to accommodate itself to altered circumstances.

But neither the tradition nor the instinct was lost. Though communism was not a possible condition for the church militant, while contending and mixing with the outer world, yet it might be possible for select bodies of earnest and holy men separating themselves from the world. The republics of monks, or Cœnobites, were founded with the aim of inducing and enabling men to live a more spiritual life, by the aid of common goods, common hopes, common work, association of like to like ; the strength of the bound bundle of sticks. An attempt was thus made to banish from the human heart the *personal* claims of ambition and emulation, to hand over to the community the rich private estate which could only be the inheritance or acquisition of the few ; to set on one side all the segregating influences of society. Under the vigorous administration and spiritual aspirations of their first founders, these orders of monks were generally eminently successful, though the success was

often of no long duration. But as often as the early discipline and high hopes of one society wasted and dwindled, another rose to take its place, and to stimulate its elder rival into renewed life.

Movements in the same direction, though not as highly organised or inspired with the same vitality, have been frequent in the various Protestant sects, as they fell away from the Roman Church. Against such the thirty-eighth article of the Church of England is directed :—‘ The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast.’ We need only mention here the Fifth Monarchy Men of Charles the Second’s reign, the ‘ Anabaptists,’ (under many different names) of various European countries at various times, and the last and least attempt, ending in painful and miserable failure, of the little body of Shakers, under their leader Mrs. Girling.

It will be observed that these attempts at religious communism have failed. Is it necessary that they should fail ?

A little book called ‘ Joshua Davidson ’ is a fair, if not an entirely trustworthy, attempt to answer this question. Joshua Davidson is, I suppose, a new Jesus, not a ‘ Christ that is to be,’ but the New Testament Christ living his Jewish life here upon earth. The authoress conceives a poor mean man, living a poor mean life, deeply imbued with the teachings, and sayings, and life of Jesus in the Gospels. He goes

about doing good. He consorts with publicans and sinners in the 'back slums' of our big towns. If a man strikes him on one cheek he turns the other. He prays the prayer of unbounded faith, to remove a mountain into the sea. Nothing daunts him. He is as irreconcilable with respectable life as Jesus was. Finally he joins the Commune of Paris, and meets a miserable and degraded end as Jesus did, failing as Jesus failed.

Failed in a far more grievous manner than that in which Jesus failed. It was real failure, as opposed to apparent failure. Failure not simply in time present, but failure so absolute, that future success was impossible. It was the rotting seed that dies, not the germinating seed that must first die. The authoress of 'Joshua Davidson' does not imply that future generations will be inspired by her hero. There is to be no 'Joshua Davidson,' Part II. His life was buried with himself. The plan of Jesus carried out in its simplicity and entirety, not transmuted to suit our times, not organised and informed with the theology and philosophy of St. Paul (the new Plato to a new Socrates; the 'Founder of Christianity' as Rénan calls him); this plan failed when tried a second time.

The above, however, is a mere figment, taken out of the misty cloudland of novels. But a real and noble attempt has *once* been made in history, among a grave and earnest people, in a stern and uncompromising time, to bring a whole nation into communion with

God, and its members into true brotherhood with one another. It was an attempt to carry out the ideal of Jesus Christ and his early disciples, with changed details to suit changed conditions. Of course I allude to the 'Commonwealth' of Oliver Cromwell—the attempted task of as noble an ambition as ever fired the brain, and warmed the heart of man. For, after all, the aims of the monks, even when successful, were selfish and self-seeking. They thought more of their own salvation than of the salvation of the world. They did not sufficiently remember that they were to be the salt of the earth. But Cromwell had an eager desire to build up a *nation*, whose national life should be the weal or wealth of the people, whose national aspirations should be after righteousness (as in the Jewish nation), whose leaders should not be the traditional and man-made aristocracy of birth and riches, but God's noblemen, the aristocracy of the most vital and spiritual power. It was to be a republic of saints. Cromwell did not idly believe in the equality of men, but in the fraternity of men. He made his protest against the distinctions of men, not against the distinctions of God. This was surely a noble ambition; but even in the height of his power it was not successful in the best way, and probably contained the seeds of death in it. And after the sudden collapse of his power, the reaction was rapid and complete. Not only was the time that followed a time of the grossest and most unprecedented profligacy; it was a time in

which Englishmen were utterly indifferent to the ancient glories of their nation. And after the Restoration, the fruits of Cromwell's work were only to be found in the incorruptibility, the just dealings, the purity of life, the good manly sense, and the faithful working of 'Cromwell's men.'

The above are, all of them, attempts at spiritual or religious communism. We will now consider more purely political attempts. The greatest of these, the most sensible, and the most successful, is that which produced the United States of America. Union springing from a common idea—liberty and brotherhood. Equality of votes, no political disqualification of any sort. No ranks, no aristocracy, only not equality of individuals. Liberty of conscience, liberty of dissent; liberty even of atheism—not a republic of saints;¹ here was the difference between Cromwell's idea and Washington's. Cromwell's was the church militant, Washington's the citizen commercial. Cromwell's was the perfection of the ideal; Washington's the perfection of the practical. Cromwell's failed; Washington's succeeded; albeit the underlying element of mob-rule is base and unheroic, and certain to lead to many mischievous results. And, indeed, however successful the scheme of the United States is, and may hereafter be, one must agree, with

¹ It was different with the early colonies, as they peopled America from the mother country. They *were* republics of saints, and the saintship was frequently of a very exclusive character.

Bulwer Lytton in 'The Coming Race,' that it is a low ideal, and only successful because it is founded on the lower attributes of social human nature. The best government possible, under the best conditions, will be far removed from that now exemplified in the United States.

The constitution of the United States was a great work, slowly evolved by a thoughtful and practical man, who led the rebellious colonies in their strife with the mother country, and afterwards welded the incongruous mass as closely as he could—a careful, thoughtful, practical attempt at communism. Not so the French Revolution, acting on, and being acted on by, the events in the contemporary history of the United States, instigated and inspired by the new doctrines of Rousseau and Voltaire; but, above all, by the extreme misery of the people; the extreme profligacy, prodigality, cruelty, estrangement, moral blindness, spiritual deadness, general recklessness, of the nobles. There was no high ideal in the minds of those who inspired the beginnings of the French Revolution; no practical aim except the eminently practical one of overturning, once and for ever, the double-heaped mountain of misery; of so eradicating the mischief that this hell upon earth should never again (in the same way or to the same extent) revisit earth. The French Revolution was not at first a restoration or a rebuilding; it was convulsion, extermination, blood, and fire. At first a cry of

vengeance and a groan of pain. Then an unreasoning and unreasonable resolve to appropriate the 'riches and goods' of this life; an eager cry for equality; this followed by a sense of insecurity and a dictatorship, ushered in with the formality of a plébiscite.

The mighty pendulum is still vibrating. A few years ago witnessed a revival of the French Revolution in the Paris Commune. Of this the less said the better. If some greater regard (in comparison with its progenitor) was shown for life, property, and the domestic ties, there was less cause for an uprising, and far less heroism. The indifference manifested for the national traditions of glory, the cold-blooded and unnecessary murders, the firing of public buildings without definite purpose; had not these things been in themselves so terrible and so sad, the littleness and wildness of the conception, and the futility of the aims, would have moved laughter and derision rather than tears. And with this last national attempt at communism we close our rough and fragmentary review.

It is clear enough, from such considerations as above, that the instinct of communism is not only an old one but an ineradicable one. It has often been the dream of the cheerless, the one eager hope that has spread a gleam of lurid poetry round a darkened and prosaic life. That all men are equal has a fine sound to those at the bottom of the ladder of life,

and the maxim is heard as well from the pulpit as from the stump—with a difference. The pulpit explains that there is no respect of persons with God ; but adds that, as regards this life, riches and rank are God's endowment to the rich and to the nobility and gentry, and that every man should be content with the work God has given him to do, and the position he has placed him in. The stump professes to desire a few practical signs of this equality. Christian philosophy enunciates the proverbial phrase 'the king and the beggar are equal,' annexing with a shrewd caution, which deprecates inconvenient logic, 'after death.' But a murmur is heard from below objecting to the somewhat cynical conclusion, and declaring that the king and beggar are equal before death, and that the king is only an authorised beggar with a few external trappings.

We are often told that this spirit is fostered by education, the penny press, and cheap railway and telegraphic communication ; and no doubt these have had an immense influence in developing that phase of the old spirit that is now the source of so much anxiety to the philanthropist and the political economist. The working-classes of civilized countries do not now, and are not likely ever again, to suffer under any intolerable wrongs that shall drive them into fierce revolt against the oppressor, as in the Feudal Ages. They have got their liberty, they can assert their own ; they only

demand a little more elbow-room, a little more of the sweets and pleasures as well as the hard labour of this life ; a little more leisure, a little more of the mischief that Satan finds for idle hands to do. They are glad to have it in their power to be 'as drunk as a lord,' as drunk as the bucks and bloods who flourished under the Georges. Moreover cheap literature and cheap periodicals enable every professor of the art of imposture to fling his nostrums broad-cast among the people ; and the people have found out that the old ways are pleasant (so they think) for their employers, and unpleasant for them. They have also learned enough to perceive that the old religious notions are imperfect and unsatisfactory, but have not learned enough either to repair the old or to supply the cumbered ground with something better. They look to their spiritual teachers and leaders and advisers, who shut their eyes to facts, or who are dumb. They have refused the old regimen of work, and kicks, and patronage, with a salve of religion cautiously introduced ; and they don't quite know what to make of their new regimen of political liberty, more money than they care to spend well, more time than they know how to spend well, many self-made teachers teaching them many new things, or old things with new faces, and telling them to forsake the old paths. Loyalty, the filial and feudal instinct, the habit of reverence and dependence, are enfeebled even to dissolution. Scepticism, discontent, ill-guided ambi-

tion, wild speculation, are rampant. Perhaps it will all come out right. Perhaps there is a good time coming. But how and when cannot as yet be predicated.

The aspect under which communism now presents itself to us in England is that of trades-unionism. That this is a great power no one will deny ; that it is destined to become one of the high ruling powers of the world probably few will deny. It becomes, then, a question of the most vital importance whether its influence is likely to be exerted for good or evil. If trades-unionism be good, then the true leader of the people must sympathise with it, must direct its course, must ally it to religion, and aid its progress. If it be evil, then the true leader of the people must set his face as a flint against it, and must associate against it all the better instincts of his fellow-men. But, in any case, he must seek to understand it.

But here is the difficulty. Trades-unionism is such a mixed affair, so heroic and so mean, so aspiring and so dastardly, so friendly and so cruel, so thoughtful and so reckless, that those who are supposed to have good means of judging are as perplexed as the Bible writers who attributed one and the same act to God and the devil. The writers of our Books of the Princes of the World would persuade us that trades-unionism is the very child of the devil, the fountain and origin of all the ills England is suffering from. The writers of the faithful Chronicles of the Peoples recognise in trades-unionism the helping

hand of God, and wish us to regard it as a defensive panoply against unscrupulous and superior force and cunning. Let us see whether we cannot disentangle the two elements of good and evil which are here struggling for the mastery, and which give it so questionable an aspect.

What is the evil element in trades-unionism? In the hands of a Broadhead trades-unionism tends to become a tyranny of workmen exercised over workmen, with all the terrorism of pickets, rattening, and class obloquy. It is an attempt (none the less real while it lasts because it is contrary to the laws of nature) to raise the price of labour and of raw material and elementary products, above their market value, to give them a fictitious value which is not justified by the state of trade. It is a resolute demand that all workmen should be treated equally, that the stupid and ignorant should be paid equally with the clever and experienced, that the idle should fare as the industrious, that the maximum of work, and of time devoted to work should be limited, and so regulated as to suit the minimum of power and inclination, with the further understanding that bad and scamped work, as it will have to be sooner done again, is to be introduced where possible. Each workman, in doing his job, leaves it in such a condition that he makes work for the workman who comes after him. It means that workmen are not paid to think and take any intelligent care for their work; but, at best, only to fulfil the

literal contract. It rigorously insists that there be no rising from the ranks, and no honest ambition *of the individual workman* fostered, 'bettering himself and thereby worsening his neighbour;' and, as a consequence, it places its veto on piecework and overwork. It proclaims the antagonism of labour and capital, of workman and master: not the friendly union. The equality it endeavours to establish is a false and arbitrary one; and as it is in the interests of a very small class, so also it is not only contrary to the interests of the masters and especially of the general public, but is even adverse to the just claims of women and boys of the working classes, who, by stringent laws and regulations, are to be held down to their own position of inferiority, the number of apprentices allowed in every case being restricted, without regard to the requirements of the work, and the wages being levelled to a low and insufficient standard.

This is the worst aspect of trades-unionism, and it presents a terrible but not an untrue picture. Now let us consider the good element.

Trades-unionism, in the hands of a wise leader, is not only a great power, but should be a beneficent power in the world. The inheritance of trades-unionism has, it is true, descended but lately to the working classes; but all professions are trades-unions, and all the etiquette of the professions are laws of trades-unionism. Trades-unionism, rightly conceived, implies organisation, *esprit de corps*, the feeling of brotherhood;

and the acquisition of these by the working classes is a real gift, and elevates them into a profession.¹ Rightly conceived, it allies itself with broadened views of cosmopolitanism, as opposed to the narrower spirit of patriotism ; it acts in sympathy with, instead of in ignorant antipathy to, alien ways and foreign nations. In the interests of humanity, of the rights of man, it announces the era of the parliament of man, of international law and international arbitration instead of senseless and wicked war. And, at home, it points to its organised array of workmen meeting organised associations of masters on equal terms, to settle trade disputes amicably and harmoniously, not by lock-outs and strikes, but by arbitration. It does not quarrel with capital ; it does not set itself against the individual liberty of men. Its work is a slow one, but a great one. And in the vista of the future, great industrial undertakings, worked on the co

¹ The body to which I have the honour to belong, the body of schoolmasters, has suffered long and suffered greatly for want of this same spirit of organisation. Schoolmasters have never become, no have ever seriously attempted to make themselves, a profession. It is true there is a Conference of Head Masters of first grade schools, which is doing useful work. But Head Masters without Assistant Masters do not make a profession, any more than Assistant Masters without Head Masters. Schoolmasters have had, in consequence, many times to undergo injustice of a perfectly preventible nature. They have had to look on helpless at wrong-doing in high quarters. And, above all, they have not been able to inaugurate or carry out reforms in their own body, or to do good work beyond the narrow precincts of their separate schools, without exercising an amount of continuous energy that can hardly be demanded or expected of ordinary human nature.

operative system, where labour and capital are in the same hands, are seen to be possible.¹

In one word : trades-unionism, in its base and illogical aspect, means the advancement of the claim of equality ; in its noble aspect, it means, or rather, perhaps, I should say, it *ought* to mean, the resolve to achieve and hold liberty and fraternity.

It cannot be but that trades-unionism, founded on the vital principle of Christian communism, is destined to be one of the great powers of the world. The religion or the sentiment which takes for its motto the utilitarian maxim, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and which bids its heralds advance in the name of 'Brotherhood,' will not easily become feeble or decayed, and certainly will not permit itself to be crushed to death. It contains the seeds of life in itself. The brutality and rapacity of barbarous times and early races have confounded the distinction between *mine* and *thine* ; it is the earnest trust of some (scarcely to be sneered at as an idle dream) that the gentleness and wisdom of a matured and great race should bind *mine* and *thine* into indissoluble union, with

¹ It should not be forgotten that able men have inveighed against arbitration, as contrary to the simplest dictates of political economy ; and that co-operative undertakings of workmen have hitherto failed. The latter fact will perhaps not surprise us. Co-operation may, however, under better conditions, and with more experience, have a greater future before it—a consummation not only to be wished, but also to be reasonably expected.

the inscription on its banners, 'Everyone for his neighbour, and God for us all.'

And here I make an end. If it be said that no conclusion is arrived at, my answer is that no conclusion has been attempted. There has been no attempt here (as has been previously said) to establish systems (still less to establish a system of my own), but to indicate principles. I shall rest satisfied if I have succeeded in making the general argument clear. The settlement of details on which so much depends, and on which there is so much to be said, would require special arguments and special treatises. Such special arguments are out of place here, and are purposely omitted. But, to return to the sphere of morals and religion, if it be asked what is the conclusion of the whole matter as regards the task to which I have restricted myself, I would answer, the pre-eminent importance of not losing the substance while fighting for the shadow; of not offering the hungry a nutshell from which the kernel has been filched; of looking at all the issues of life in one broad view, and not narrowing one's sympathies to one sort of people or one set of human interests, to the exclusion or dwarfing of the rest. He who aspires to be a leader of the people in a spirit of eager-hearted and religious philanthropy must never count that he has already apprehended, but must reach forward to the things that are before in an ever-

opening and glorious future. He must take to heart the things that the people take to heart, and must become a guide in those matters in which they desire and call for a guide. If, as I have contended, certainty throughout the realm of religious thought is difficult, if not impossible, to attain: but if certainty is there most closely reached, where the religious sentiment is most universal and most important, and is also most elementary and fundamental; then let the religious teacher, the true man of God who 'sells the truth,' proclaim that Good News which is most certain, and therefore most important and far reaching, in its influence and effects. Eternal truths are ever young, ever beautiful, ever life-giving. The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. Eternal truths vest themselves in different and questionable trappings, but the truth will not be questioned by the eye of the man who looks behind the trappings. Creeds are antagonistic, religions antipathetic in their accidentals; but, if they are worthy, the essential basis is the same. He to whom the love of the Father of the spirits of all men is evident, as the sun in the firmament is evident by its light and warmth, will have sympathy with all the children of the one Father, and will believe that his Father has imparted to his brother as well as to himself a message of love, albeit not in the same words as to himself. If he, in all the realms of literature, ancient and modern, Christian and Pagan, can find no motto which more nearly

expresses his inmost feeling of good and right than the well known words, '*Homo sum ; humani nihil a me alienum puto*,' he will surely go one step further to that deepest and most living truth beyond which man cannot reach, and say : The brotherhood of man is founded on the fatherhood of God. He cannot have separated Himself from His children. He cannot have left them in the dark to follow the blind and devious leadings of blind guides. He will have given a Light to light every man that cometh into the world. A sure and recognisable light, that will show men clearly that He is not far from every one of us.

And let him that would be a spiritual teacher of the people remember that 'every one of us' and 'every man that cometh into the world' mean not religious people only, but so-called infidels ; not the orthodox only, but heretics ; not the respectable only, but revolutionary communists and socialists ; not Christians only, but Mahommedans, and pagans, and degraded savages. Then the people will know that he has the word of God in him because he will be as the rain and the sunshine which are equally shed on the just and the unjust, and freely imparted to the evil and the good.

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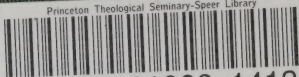
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